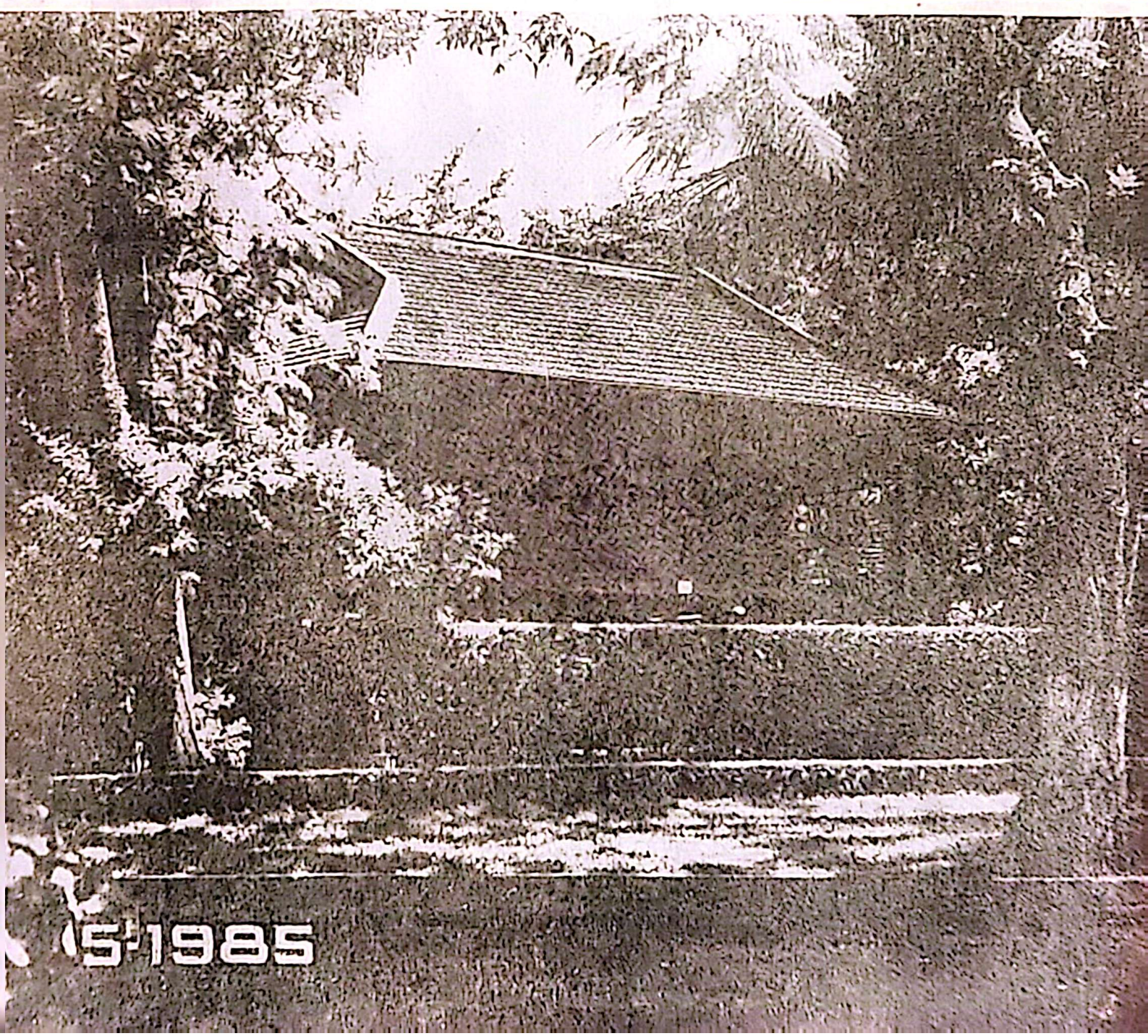
Vietnam courier

A MONTHLY REVIEW



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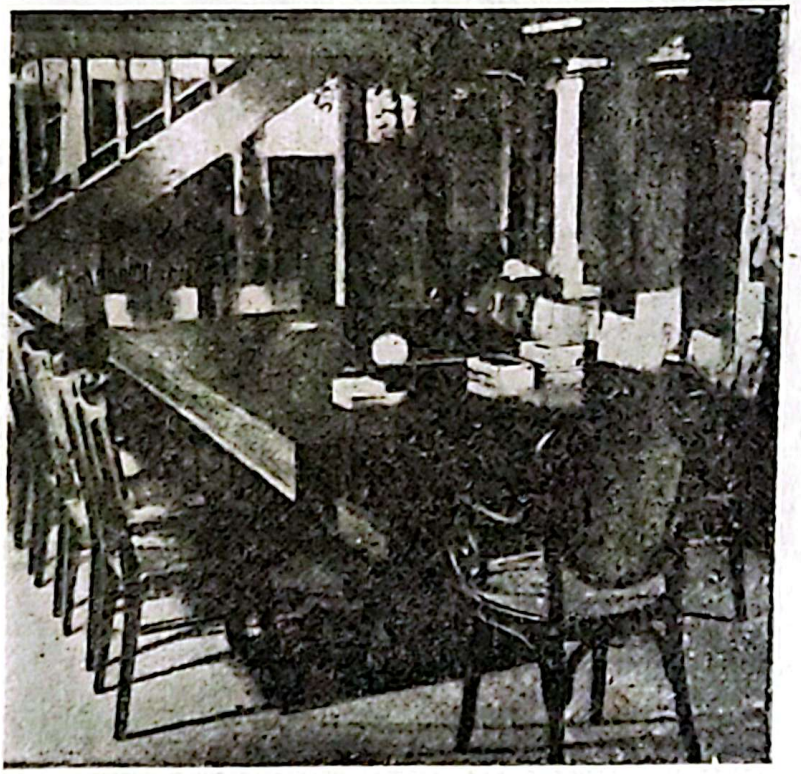
SOME IMAGES OF PRESIDENT HO CHI MINH'S LIFE AND WORK

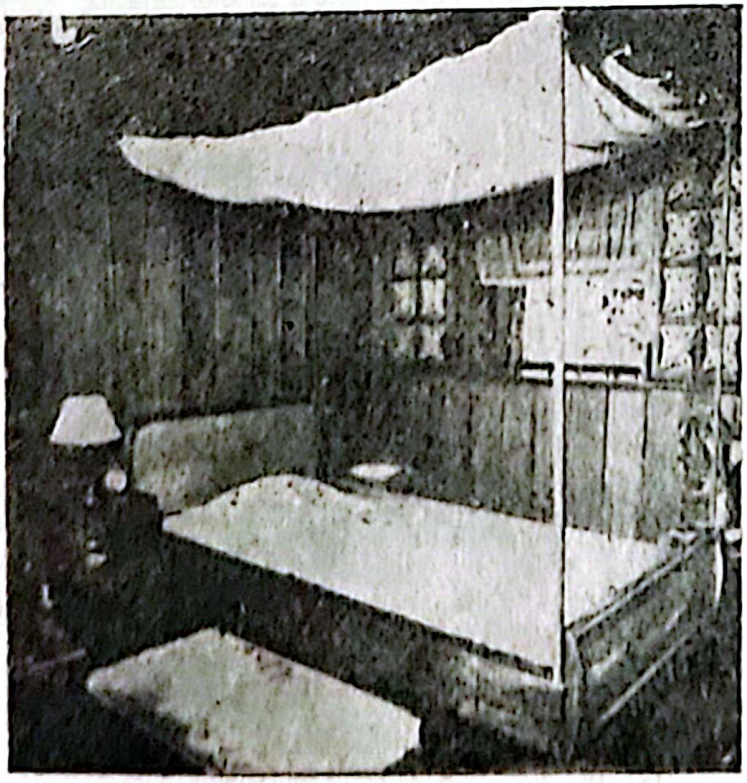
Photos: VNA



The reception room on the ground floor of the house-on-stilts, where the President often met with other members of the Political Bureau.

Everyday, before and after work President Ho took care of the milk-apple tree that was offerred him by the people of the South.

His bed-room.



THE LESSON OF THE GREAT VICTORY OVER HITLERITE FASCISM AND JAPANESE MILITARISM

HOANG TUNG
Secretary of the Central Committee
of the Communist Party of Vietnam

This year, the Soviet Union, together with the other fraternal socialist countries and the whole of progressive mankind solemnly commemorate the 40th anniversary of the victory over Hitlerite fascism and Japanese militarism.

Forty years have elapsed. Today, from the height of the extremely great results it brought to mankind, we feel all the more deeply the historical magnitude, the global character and the epochal significance of that great victory recorded by the world revolutionary forces after the October Revolution.

The Second World War started by fascism and militarism was the result of the coordinated global strategy of imperialism aimed at wiping out socialism and other revolutionary forces, and re-establishing imperialist rule over the world by means of the most barbarous methods of domination and oppression. It was the bloodiest and most destructive war in human history. It involved 61 countries and 80 per cent of the world's population in the fire tempest of the war and killed 50 million people. This global historical confrontation led to an outcome that completely ran counter to the wish of fascism, of imperialism in general, and of other reactionary forces, including the opportunists: the Soviet Union completely crushed fascism and militarism.

This was a miraculous victory of socialism; it brought about upheavals in the whole world and determined the orientation of the history of mankind. It paved the way for the formation of the socialist system which has continued to expand on several continents over the last 40 years. This system has become ever stronger and has increasingly played the role of a decisive factor in the development of the whole of human society. It is thanks to this victory that a hundred or so countries, formerly colonies or dependencies of imperialism, have won back independence and freedom and have become another important factor in the development of the world. This victory has made large breaches in the imperialist system and seriously weakened it. Capitalism has been forced into a deep, general crisis with no way out. This victory has changed the balance of forces in the world in favour of socialism and the forces of national independence, democracy and peace, and created favourable conditions for a ceaseless development and strengthening of the revolutionary forces.

The victory over Hitlerite fascism and Japanese militarism has shown that the ideals of socialism have become invincible material and spiritual forces. The victory of socialism has caused imperialist and reactionary forces to face their collapse with fear. They have distorted the truth and attempted to belittle the historical dimensions and the global significance of the victory of the anti-fascist war, and to depreciate the role of the Soviet Union as the decisive combat force in the war.

In this war the Soviet people had to shoulder the historic mission of defending themselves and the whole of mankind. The Soviet Union did its best to rally all anti-fascist forces and to unite all people who could come together in a front to oppose and eliminate that great scourge of nations. Today, the propaganda machine of the imperialists and their henchmen and that of Beijing are striving to distort this great obvious truth: the Soviet Union was the decisive combat force in the war against fascism and militarism in both Asia and Europe. Revolutionary Mongolia contributed a direct part to defeating Japanese militarism. The peoples of European and Asian countries led by their communist parties fought very courageously against fascism and militarism, made great contributions to the common victory, and directly prepared for the birth of many socialist countries. The people and communists of Poland, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Germany, Hungary, Albania, Czechoslovakia, Romania and many other peoples in Europe such as the French, Italians, Greeks, Spanish, Portuguese... fought valiantly against fascism and suffered great sacrifices. Together with the Soviet people they are the authors of this great epic of the 20th century. The sons and daughters of many peoples fought on Soviet land. In Asia the Chinese people fought for 15 years against aggression by Japanese fascism. Most peoples of Asia fought valiantly against the Japanese militarists from 1941 to 1945. We have plenty of evidence to nullify allegations aimed at

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Front cover: In this house-on-stilts, President Ho Chi Minh lived and worked in the period from mid-1958 to his death on 3 September 1969.

Photo: NGUYEN VAN TY

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distorting history and belittling the role of the Soviet Union in defeating fascism and militarism. The Soviet Union had to bear the main burden in the war against fascism and militarism. The greatest military conflict in human history took place on the Soviet-German front, the main battlefront of the Second World War, expanding over 3,000 — 6,000 km. In the various stages of this war, the number of troops fielded by both sides was a colossal one: from 8.4 to 12.4 million men. In order to attack the Soviet Union the Hitlerite fascists had to muster over three-fourths, that is 77%, of their armed forces, together with a large number of tanks, and airplanes. Never in the history of war had an aggressor hurled such a huge force against a single country. The Soviet Union had to endure the sacrifice of 20 million lives, among them 7 million officers and men and the destruction of hundreds of cities and towns and over 70,000 villages and hamlets; 25 million people lost their homes and tens of thousands of agricultural enterprises were burned to ashes. The war destroyed nearly one-third of the total material wealth of the Soviet land. Of the 13.6 million casualties suffered by the enemy, 10 million were inflicted on them on the Soviet-German front, where the bulk of their planes, tanks, and artillery pieces was destroyed. In Asia, within ten days the Soviet Army broke the back of the Japanese army, routing 1 million of its crack troops and forcing them to surrender unconditionally. Today, we have the right to ask: What would be the situation on this planet, had it not been for the great sacrifices endured by the Soviet Union? President Ho Chi Minh said: "In the Second World War the Soviet Union wiped out huge military forces of the fascist aggressors, which had been carefully prepared with the assistance of all the imperialist countries. The Soviet Union saved the world from enslavement by the barbarous Hitlerites and dealt a decisive blow at the main forces of the Japanese militarists. All the world's peoples, chiefly those of the East, are grateful to the Soviet Union"[1].

We also have abundant evidence to refute all allegations aimed at distorting history and belittling the role of the Soviet Union in defeating Hitlerite fascism and Japanese militarism, and to lay bare the double-dealing and the ignominious surrender of the imperialists right from the days of the dirty deal concluded at Munich. Even after they had joined the anti-fascist alliance they still pursued a middle-of-the-road policy, sought to preserve their forces, postponed the opening of a second front and waited for the two main belligerent forces, namely socialism and fascism, to exterminate each other and

(Continued on page 30)

1. Ho Chi Minh, Selected Works, Su That Publishing House, Hanoi, 1960, p. 640.

In Vietnam there remain many vestiges and relics about the life and revolutionary activities of President Ho Chi Minh. Among them are the places in the Presidential Palace in Hanoi where he lived and worked. There from late 1954 to his death on 3 September 1969 the President spent most of his time.

Where President Ho lived and worked

The Presidential Palace

The Presidential Palace is located in a large compound in Hanoi. It is a three-storeyed building built at the turn of this century for the French Governor-General of Indochina.

On 10 October 1954, the capital Hanoi was liberated from the French army of occupation.

In late December that year, President Ho Chi Minh decided that the building be converted into a conference and reception hall for important delegations from various parts of the country and from abroad. For his residence, he chose a small house at the back of the main building in an area formerly reserved for the staff of the French Governor-General.

The main reception room, known as the Mirror Room, was the place where the President received his guests and presided over many meetings of the cabinet in the early years after liberation.

There took place in March 1955 the first session of the National Assembly held after the restoration of peace to discuss and decide on the most urgent tasks of the country in the post-war period.

It was there that on 10 September 1955 President Ho received the delegates to the founding congress of the Vietnam Fatherland Front.

The President, on many occasions, received here the credentials of ambassadors of fraternal socialist countries, neighbouring countries and friendly countries.

The children always received special treatment from the President. Shortly after he moved to the Presidential Palace, on 2 September 1955, the President invited some of his "good nephews and nieces" for a visit here and this became a regular practice with him until his death.

The Arbour

At the back of the Presidential Palace is a gravel ground of about 100 square metres decorated with an eight-pointed star in mosaic. The place is half-surrounded by a pergola constituted by 32 round pillars, eight square pillars, and a concrete framework disposed in a half circle. The arbour supports climbing plants with violet flowers which strike a pleasant note amidst the verdure of the garden.

President Ho liked to receive his guests beneath this arbour on fine-weather days.

It was under this pergola that in May 1957 the President welcomed a delegation of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR led by President Voroshilov. In an atmosphere of fraternal friendship, host and guests watched a group of Young Pioneers sing and dance in honour of the delegation.

Also beneath this arbour, in October 1958, the President received a delegation of world youth and students, and in 1962, on the occasion of the New Year, a delegation of the Afro-Asian Peoples' Solidarity Committee and a delegation of the World Peace Council.

In the years 1962, 1963 and 1965 in particular, the President warmly welcomed delegations of the South then fighting against aggression by the US imperialists.

Those who had the good fortune to meet the President, children and elderly persons, cadres from different branches and services, guests from various parts of the country and foreign visitors, all felt relaxed when they noted the warm feelings and the cordial attitude of the President.

Many foreigners who had met the President and who had occasion to return to Vietnam after his death have been invited to revisit the arbour. They would reminisce about how the President made them feel completely at home and very close to him, as if he were

their brother, friend and comrade. He was indeed their dear "Uncle Ho".

The Mango Pathway

Leading away from the main building is a gravel path about 5 metres in width and more than 200 metres in length lined by old mango trees. After the President's death, the poet To Huu, member of the Political Bureau of the Party Central Committee, referred to it as "The Mango Pathway" in a poem dedicated to the President.

The President used to take his morning exercises and his afternoon strolls along this path. These exercises and strolls were an integral part of his daily activities, especially in his later years.

The House-on-Stilts

This was the working and living place of the President in the last 11 years of his life. This is also the place where most relics about him are kept.

Leaving the small house at the back of the Presidential Palace, President Ho came and lived in this new home toward mid-1958. According to close aides of the President, this house-on-stilts was built during one of his trips abroad and was completed in one month, on 17 May 1958. The house comprises two parts. The floor on piles has two rooms: a study and a bed-room. The ground floor is not walled in and is furnished with a conference table for meetings of the Party Political Bureau.

In his study, on the writing-desk of the President, are some books by Vietnamese and foreign authors which the President had been reading before he was taken ill.

Among the foreign authors were V. I. Lenin, David Schoenbrun, Benjamin Spock, Robert William...

The President took particular interest in "good people and good deeds" from all branches and services. He would note down commendable deeds and people reported on over the radio, in the press or in news bulletins. For instance, a child returning to its owner a found object, or carrying a crippled friend on his back to school, or saving a friend from drowning; workers, members of cooperatives and cadres who devised new methods to save materials and increase productivity; members of the Young Volunteers Corps, the security service, and the army who courageously fought to protect the people and preserve social order and security, ensured good communications, shot down US aircraft or put out of action US aggressors, etc. After checking the facts the President would send to the meritorious people insignias bearing his effigy. Stories about them were later collected into small books entitled "Good People and Good Deeds". The President gave instructions for them to be widely popularized "so that others might follow their examples". He used to say that if a man is not resolved to perform well even in small matters he cannot hope to accomplish great tasks. The President also recommended that publishers print on the first page of their books this plea: "The publishing house welcomes suggestions and criticisms from its readers."

On the ground floor there is a green telephone which he used to communicate with the other members of the Political Bureau, and also two black ones for communications with the Operations Department of the General Staff, the Air Defence Service, and the Air Force. Another relic is a steel helmet he would don each time the air raid alarm was sounded.

The President had a cement and wooden bench built around the room for his young guests. Later, a goldfish aquarium was added in the verandah.

In winter, the President would work on the upper floor. When cadres come to work, he would sit on the wooden floor with them.

There are built-in bookshelves in both the study and the bed-room. On a top shelf is a small lacquer box in which the President kept handy some of his New Year greeting cards. A small typewriter is kept in the lowest shelf. The President used it to type the articles he sent to the press or letters of commendation to localities and units credited with outstanding exploits.

His favourite readings were Lenin's writings, books on the line of the Vietnamese revolution written by other Party and State leaders, books on the histories of fraternal communist and workers' parties, books on literature and art, histories of other countries, and particularly books on Vietnam by foreign authors.

The President had the habit of making marks and notes while reading. Often after finishing a book he would have his secretaries sent it together with his observations to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of National Defence, etc.

About this house-on-stilts, in an article marking the 80th birth anniversary of the President on 19 May

1970, Chairman of the Council of Ministers Pham Van Dong wrote:

"The simple house-on-stilts where our President lived and worked has only a few small rooms. While his mind was open to the winds of the time, this small house was bathed in wind and sunlight and filled with the fragrance of flowers from the garden. What a simple and noble life his was."

The Milk-Apple Tree

In the spring of 1955, a ship carrying resistance fighters from the South to the North under the Geneva Agreements brought a milk-apple tree meant to symbolize the feeling of the people of the South toward President Ho Chi Minh.

The tree was first planted beside the pond near the President's initial residence. Each day, in the early morning or late afternoon, the President would take time off to water it.

In May 1958, when he moved to the house-on-stilts, the President had the tree transferred to a place close to his study.

Busy as he was, the President never forgot to water the tree each day. In winter, he would ask his aides to protect it with a coat of straw. When the tree had grown up he entrusted it to the care of his aides.

When it bore its first fruit the President observed that the fruit were few and small. An aide said this was because this tree was from the warm South and could not grow well in the cold climate of the North. The President said it could be so, but still he urged his aides to tend the tree as best they could.

Today, visitors to the house-on-stilts of the President, when standing beside the thriving milk-apple tree, would recall these famous words of the President: "The South is always in my heart."

The Fish Pond

The fish pond lies in front of the house-on-stilts. It was a habit of the President to feed the fish in late afternoon after work. He would clap his hands and the fish would rush in for their food, some so eager as to splash onto the half-submerged last step leading into the pond.

The pond is not a very large one. It is surrounded by a curving wall and on its edge are shade and flower trees, especially willows and flame-trees dotted with bright red flowers in summer.

It was originally a small pond where the deer kept in the zoo of the French Governor-General came to drink. It was dredged and hibiscus was planted on its bank. Then it was stocked with fish. The Dinh Bang fish farm (now the Central Research Centre for Fresh Water Fish) in Ha Bac province sent a great variety of fish, mostly of the carp family. Well tended, they throve and multiplied. In very hot or cold weather, the President would instruct his aides to provide shelter for the fish in the form of bamboo frames where duckweed was grown.

In 1959, the Tien Phong agricultural cooperative (now the Yen So co-op on Hanoi's outskirts) was the first one to receive a batch of fry from President Ho's pond. Acting upon the President's recommendations, the co-op took great care of the fish which it raised in a model pond called "Uncle Ho's fish pond". Today, the commune of Yen So boasts 67 hectares of water area for high-yield fish rearing according to modern technique.

The Orchard

The President's house-on-stilts stands in a large garden. In front of the house is a hedge of hibiscus similar to the one around his paternal home in his native village.

The plots of land around the house were gradually transformed into vegetable gardens and orchards with a great variety of fruit trees such as orange, grapefruit, litchi, longan, or flower plants like jasmine, magnolia, orchid, etc.

At cabinet meetings held in late winter or early spring, President Ho would give oranges from his orchard to every one present, ministers and aides.

In January 1962, the Soviet cosmonaut Herman Titov, on his first visit to Vietnam, was received by the President at his house-on-stilts. He likes to recall that the President walked him to the garden and personally picked a few oranges for him.

The garden on the grounds of the Presidential Palace, lovingly tended, has grown ever more luxuriant. In 1979, on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the President's death, many localities brought saplings of the species for which they are renowned to plant in this garden. Many Party and State leaders have also planted memorial trees. A mass movement to build gardens and fish ponds patterned on President Ho's has been launched in many localities and has brought them practical socio-economic benefits. ●

PAC BO – «HAMLET OF THE FOUNTAINHEAD»

LE TAN

Pac Bo became the headquarters of the Vietnamese revolution on 8 February 1941 when President Ho Chi Minh, after spending thirty years abroad striving to find the way to national salvation, returned to the country and established underground bases to build up the revolutionary movement.

Pac Bo is the name of a hamlet in Truong Ha commune, Ha Quang district, Cao Bang province. It lies in a valley close to the border with China. This remote area covered by dense forests is inhabited mostly by members of the Nung ethnic minority. In the language of the Nung, Pac Bo means the "fountainhead". After President Ho's death on 3 September 1969, the Cultural Service of Cao Bang built the Pac Bo Museum which was opened to the public on 8 February 1970. The museum keeps more than one hundred relics connected with President Ho's activities in the area. A two-storeyed guest-house was later built on Na Ngan hill. It has an outside staircase in front, like that in a Nung house-on-stilts. The whole area was destroyed by invading Chinese troops in February 1979. Part of it has been restored.

From the guest-house on the hilltop a visitor can take in a vast scenery. To the north, on the border with China, is a succession of woody mountains. A high peak with sharp contours stands out after shrouded in white clouds and evoking a white-bearded old man. The mountain used to be called Na Tang by the local population. But it has lost its old name since President Ho called it Mount Karl Marx. Nearby flows a stream, once known as Suoi Giang. It was renamed Lenin stream by President Ho. A carriageable red-earth road winds its course through the valley leading up to the vicinity of the Coc Bo cave, where the President established his headquarters after his return to the country in 1941.

First, let us visit Bo Bam hamlet where President Ho first made acquaintance with the local population in the person of Duong Van Dinh, an old local farmer with whom he later established ties of sworn brotherhood. Leaving the red-earth road let us turn left. After crossing a small wooden bridge spanning the Lenin stream we enter the hamlet. Duong Van Dinh is no more, but we can meet his descendants who had benefited at an early age from education by President Ho Chi Minh. Some have become high-ranking army officers, others are holding key posts in the province or district. Vuong Kim Lien, a daughter-in-law of Duong Van Dinh, reminisces about Uncle Ho: That day, leaving Coc Bo cave, the future President, dressed in indigo Nung pyjamas, walked barefoot and hatless into Bo Bam hamlet. She remembers him as a slender old man with shining eyes and a small goatee. He introduced himself as Thu Son, and sat down with her father-in-law. They communicated by writing Han characters on a piece of paper because President Ho then spoke only a few Nung words while Duong Van Dinh knew very little Viet.

That very first visit by old Thu Son gained him the affection of all members of Duong Van Dinh's family. They later followed his call to join the revolution and won over others in the hamlet to the cause. The hamlet people called President Ho by the affectionate name of Old Thu or Old Ke. Vuong Kim Lien's husband, who later became a colonel in the Vietnam People's Army, and his brothers used to come to Coc Bo cave to visit President Ho, who taught them the three R's and how to mobilize and organize the people to wage revolution. For her part, Vuong Kim Lien was entrusted with taking the daily meals to Old Ke and alerting him to possible dangers. Once, seeing the shabby state of Old Ke's clothes she bought him a new set with her savings. Even today, her eyes would grow moist whenever she talks of those days when President Ho did not have warm clothes and lived on meagre food. After the President's death in 1969, each home in Pac Bo set up an altar dedicated to him. They think of him not only as the respected leader of the nation but also as a beloved member of their family.

One day in 1961 President Ho visited Pac Bo after twenty years' absence. The road being not yet completed, he had to travel over

the last portion on horseback. The villagers, as soon as they heard of his arrival, flocked to the village entrance. He dismounted and asked with a gentle smile, "Why this formal welcome to a man returning among his family?"

He inquired after each family and the changes in the village since he left. He spent one day visiting the Coc Bo cave and the hut in Khuoi Nam, and lunched with the family of Duong Van Dinh. He urged people to work hard to make Pac Bo more beautiful and prosperous, and to build a small hydro-electric power station which would provide the current to husk rice, process animal feed and light the local hospital and school. Some time later, with assistance from the central government, a small hydro-electric power station was built in Pac Bo. and all homes were lighted by "Uncle Ho's electricity". A public-address system was also set up. In late afternoon, after dinner the old folk would come out on their verandhas and listen to the news and songs coming from the loudspeakers.

Though the village has changed a lot, the small lane leading to the Coc Bo cave still keeps its untamed look. The Lenin stream is so limpid that its bed can be clearly seen under two metres of water. The piled-up pebbles provide an ideal refuge for fish of many colours. On the edge of the stream patches of water cress grow luxuriantly. The villagers call it "Uncle Ho's vegetable" because it is believed that water cress was first planted here by the President himself. At one point the Lenin stream becomes a waterfall which sends up white foam as it crashes on the rocks. After passing Mount Karl Marx one arrives at Coc Bo. Picking our way through thick undergrowth and stepping on unsteady rocks one comes to the place where the President used to sit working on a translation of the History of the Communist Party of the USSR. His "desk" was a flat-topped rock. One can also see a guava-tree the leaves of which were used by President Ho to make "tea". Also lovingly preserved is a bamboo planted by the President during his visit to Pac Bo in 1961. The tree has grown into a thick grove.

The Coc Bo cave is not far from the bamboo grove. But without a guide the visitor would find the cave only with some difficulty. He has to cross a small ravine and climb fifty metres up a slope before reaching the entrance. Stalactites and stalagmites can be seen after the eyes have grown used to the dim light in the cave which is the size of a small room. Above is a small natural aperture which lets in a little sunlight. On rainy days it is rather damp inside the cave. Before the cave was vandalized by Chinese troops, there was a stalactite which President Ho had carved into a figure which bears some resemblance to Karl Marx. On the wall of the cave he had marked in Han characters the date of his arrival at the cave. The floor is quite uneven and there is only enough room for a few persons. The President used to sleep on a rough bed of tree branches.

After climbing up a few more rocky slopes one arrives at Lung Lan cave. In fact, it is only a rock shelter where the President took temporary refuge when Coc Bo was raided by colonial police. After staying in Lung Lan for about a week, he moved to Khuoi Nam. This time he no longer lived in a cave but had a small hut built on the bank of the Khuoi Nam stream. It was in this shack that the President chaired the 8th plenum of the Party Central Committee, which decided vital questions of the revolution such as the founding of the League for the Independence of Vietnam (Viet Minh) and that of the revolutionary army. It was also at Khuoi Nam that the President wrote appeals signed Nguyen Ai Quoc (Nguyen The Patriot) calling on the Vietnamese people to rise up and drive out the French colonialists and Japanese fascists and win back national independence. Even today, reading these appeals of President Ho stirs the heart of every Vietnamese. Just as in Coc Bo, everything here reminds us of our dear Uncle Ho. The small trees which served as props for the shack have now become big trees. One can still recognize the places where the President grew vegetables, and did his morning exercises. One can visit Coi Rac where he inaugurated the first military and political course, the Si Dien cave, a cache for Party documents and the Nguom Vu cave where the President used to meet and talk to cadres.

* * *

On the day of his funeral in Hanoi, here in Pac Bo the villagers dressed in white, the traditional sign of mourning in Vietnam, gathered on the bank of the Lenin stream. They bent over the water and drank a gulp from the stream to show their gratitude to President Ho. Doesn't the proverb say: "When one drinks from a stream, one should think of the fountainhead". It is inspired by the same feeling that Vietnamese from all parts of the country have gone in pilgrimage to Pac Bo — the Hamlet of the Fountainhead. ●

ANECDOTES ABOUT UNCLE HO

HOANG QUOC VIET

In these spring days let me tell you some anecdotes about President Ho Chi Minh's everyday life. They were either witnessed by myself or recounted to me by members of the President's entourage. Things that might seem trivial but which have long remained in my mind.

As we are welcoming spring, let me start with flowers. A friend once asked me, "Is it true that President Ho liked tuberoses best?" No, this is not true. He liked flowers in general and mostly fragrant species such as lotus, jasmine, rose, soi, tuberose, and also hyacinth whose flowers exude their perfume only at night.

He loved children to a fault. He would pause in the midst of a conversation or a reading to listen to children's singing coming from the radio. On several occasions, he asked his attendant to guess the age of the child who was singing, and then phone the radio to check. He himself would venture a guess. In most cases, it turned out that the President had guessed right while the attendant, a man with young children, was wide of the mark.

The President once asked a member of his entourage to bring along his 5-year-old child. Fearing that this visit would interfere with the President's work schedule, the cadre decided to bring his child very early in the morning. When they arrived the father, seeing that the President's room was not yet lit up, decided to wait at the foot of the staircase. But very soon the President was up, and when father and son came up to his room, he already had some flowers ready for his young guest. He said a few kind words to the child and excused himself for a while to do his morning exercises. Back into the room and seeing that the sweets and cakes he had laid out on the table for the child had remained intact, he said to the father: "At home he is your son but here he is my guest, and your duty is to help me entertain him."

What did he dislike most? It's a rather difficult question. But I can say that he had a great aversion for lack of punctuality. Once, an army general arrived a few minutes later than the appointed time. He had a quite valid excuse. Yet the President said: "Your soldiers would lose a lot of time for every minute their commander is late." Once, a cadre arrived late for a mass meeting. The President asked him:

"How long are you behind time?"

"Ten minutes, Uncle," the other replied.

"No, ten minutes multiplied by 500. There are 500 participants in this meeting, and each lost ten minutes waiting for you." Such was the way he educated cadres in everyday life. I still remember my first meeting with the President. It was in the spring of 1941 when our delegation went to Cao Bang to attend the 8th plenum of the Party Central Committee. After the conference, as we were about to leave, the President checked with us one by one to make sure we were strictly observing the rule of not having any Party document on us on our way back. Two members of the Central Vietnam Party Committee confessed that, afraid lest they might forget some important details, they had copied the resolution down in minuscule handwriting and hidden the pieces of paper inside the hems of their coats. The President asked them to remove and destroy them in his presence. This story I have noted in some of my memoirs, except this detail: On our trip home our delegation was hunted by enemy police and the two comrades I mentioned above were arrested in Nghe An province. How profoundly we were impressed by the President's insistence on the observance of the principles of clandestine work.

Such violations of principles were always severely criticized by the President who would ask the culprits to correct them immediately. But for minor shortcomings he would show great leniency which went to the hearts of the offenders. Once during the war of resistance our office in Viet Bac gathered a

bumper harvest of pumpkins we had planted ourselves. One comrade chose one of the biggest and sent it to the President, probably as evidence of our "achievements in production". The following day, Uncle Ho sent us a slip of paper with two lines of verse:

"When eating a fruit one should remember the grower:

Thank you for the pumpkin, but it is, alas, unripe."

Everyone knows that the President was a voracious reader and a regular listener to the radio. What broadcasts captured his attention most? Children's songs, reports on fighting in the South. Once, an aide wanted to turn off the radio for the news bulletin contained information already communicated by the army. But the President stopped him with a smile: "Let me make sure," he said, "that our radio is not making groundless boasts, because if it does, the enemy would laugh at us while our own people would not believe our claims." He would listen with particular attention to the radio programme called "Good people, good deeds". On many occasions, he would ask the radio people for a copy of the bulletin and read it carefully to check the facts and then have insignia bearing his effigy sent to meritorious people.

Did the President pay any attention to what was written about himself? He did. Once, having come across a newspaper article in which the author (a young woman) related how she had worked as a member of his guard, he smiled and commented: "How could she have protected me in those days when she was only a little girl? More probably, I had to protect her."

Once, his secretary complained to him: "Many people have been writing about you but we have no way to check the facts." The President told him: "Let me give you a secret recipe to judge the worth of those writings. After reading them, ask yourself, first: do those stories serve any useful purpose? Second, do they sound logical?"

Let me tell you this anecdote about what once was a favourite story with many of our writers and artists. According to them when President Ho first set foot in the country after so many years abroad, he bent down and picked up a clod of earth and kissed it. Such a fanciful gesture born of their petty-bourgeois romantic imagination simply does not accord with the character of the President. "Could I be that careless about hygiene?" the President once wryly commented.

Much more could be told about President Ho's everyday life. They are meaningful trivialities in the life of a great communist. ●

THE PARTY OF HO CHI MINH

FRANÇOISE CORRÈZE

For the French comrade that I am, the Vietnamese Party, the Workers' Party, is indentified with a name and a man: Ho Chi Minh! The young man at the Tours Congress in 1920, but first of all the combatant of Pac Bo. The man who gave his whole life to his people whom he led to Independence.

Uncle Ho of the children, whom he loved, but his eyes, so gentle when he looked at them, could be "steely in face of shame and servitude".

Ho, who knew how to listen to, understand, and inspire those who, even for a moment, went with him on the road to liberty.

Ho, the Communist, who really set in motion that proletarian revolution to save the country and liberate the nation.

Ho, the Communist, who led a life in harmony with his ideal, a simple life like that of the people whom he loved.

Ho, who spoke to his people, young and old, without dogmatism, in true words which lead to action. Ho, who knew how difficult it was to exercise a power which might corrupt.[1]

Uncle Ho is no more. His body rests in the Mausoleum. But I will not place in my mind another image next to that which I keep of him: his look, his gesture, the lively silhouette of Ho Chi Minh whom I had the honour and joy of meeting in Paris in 1946 at the end of our resistance to Nazism, at the dawn of the Vietnamese epic for independence.

1. "Ours is a Party in power. Each Party member, each cadre, must be imbued with revolutionary morality." (Testament of Ho Chi Minh, May 1969).

THE VIETNAMESE REVOLUTION IN THE CONTEXT OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR

NGUYEN VINH
Member of the Party Central Committee
Head of the Marx — Lenin Institute

As an integral part of the world revolution, the Vietnamese revolution ever since it came under the leadership of the Communist Party (the Indochinese Communist Party was born in 1930) has kept abreast of the international proletarian revolution. In the period of the Democratic Front (1936 — 1939) the Party launched a broad mass movement against fascism and war, for democratic rights.

When World War Two broke out, the foremost task of the working class and communists the world over was to mobilize all revolutionary and progressive forces in a united front to eliminate fascism, support the great patriotic war of the Soviet people, and defend the Soviet State — the bulwark of peace and world revolution. To this end the Communist Party of Vietnam convened its 6th Plenum (6 November 1939), which stated that "The old order has been shaken to its foundations. All oppressed peoples will rise up to break the centuries-long yoke of slavery..." In Indochina "the evils caused by imperialist war will accelerate the radicalization and revolutionization of the masses... The people's anger will reach boiling point and revolution will break out. The revolution for the liberation of Indochina will gloriously triumph"[1]. The 8th Plenum held in May 1941 put out an even stronger assessment: "If the previous imperialist war gave birth to the Soviet Union, a socialist State, the present imperialist war will create many more socialist countries, the revolution in many countries will triumph." On the strength of this analysis, the Resolutions of the 6th Plenum (November 1939), 7th Plenum (November 1940), 8th Plenum (May 1941) effected a shift in the Party's strategic guidance and regarded the overthrow of imperialism and the conquest of national independence as the foremost task of the Vietnamese revolution. "Temporarily shelving the question of agrarian revolution, the Party set up the Viet Minh Front, established a base area, boosted the political struggle, built up armed forces, closely followed the evolution of the war, supported the Soviet Union, and actively prepared for a general insurrection to seize power when the opportunity arose.

While in Europe the Hitlerite fascists attacked Poland, Norway, France, Greece... and eventually the Soviet Union, in Asia and the Pacific region the Japanese militarists expanded their war of aggression against China, occupied the colonies of Britain, France and the USA and prepared for an attack on the Soviet Union from the south.

After the French Government surrendered to the Hitlerite fascists, in Indochina Governor-General Decoux opened the door of Vietnam to the Japanese militarists, and "since the autumn of 1940 our country became a colony of Japan and was no longer one of France"[2]. While the French colonialists became subservient to the Japanese aggressors, the Vietnamese people's struggle became a direct armed struggle against aggressive war by militarism. "Now the aim of the proletariat and oppressed peoples in Indochina is to overthrow fascism and its stooges. This aim is exactly the same as that of the world proletariat, of the toiling and progressive people. Therefore, the Indochinese revolution constitutes a fairly important component of the democratic movement against international fascism, and our Party has the great mission of leading the Indochinese peoples in their national liberation revolution, thus contributing to the fight to overthrow international fascism and advance toward the emancipation of mankind from the capitalist yoke"[3].

While the French colonialists in Indochina surrendered to and served the Japanese militarists, the Vietnamese people, led by our Party, "courageously sided with the Allies against fascism"[4]. On 27 September 1940, when the Japanese invaders set foot in our country, the population of Bac Son (Lang Son), led by the local Party branch, rose up against the French and the Japanese, thus starting the fight against fascism and militarism in Vietnam.

Despite the repression and massacre unleashed by the Japanese militarists and their stooges — the reactionary French colonialists and the pro-Japanese puppet Tran Trong Kim government — the Communist fighters, who stood in the van of the struggle, made speeches, distributed leaflets, unfurled banners, issued newspapers to lay bare in a timely way the enemy's new crimes and such hoaxes as the building of a "co-prosperity sphere" and the theory of "Greater East Asia", while propagating news about the victories of the Soviet Army.

Many Vietnamese communists and patriots laid down their lives in this struggle. The prisons of Con Dao, Hoa Lo, Chi Hoa, Son La, Buon Ma Thuot were crammed with anti-fascist fighters, who closely followed the evolution of the struggle and opposed a resolute resistance to the enemy. The victories of the Soviet Army constituted a great morale-booster for our revolutionaries in fascist jails.

The policies enforced by the French colonialists in their Indochinese colonies were already extremely cruel. But when Indochina fell into the Japanese militarists' hands, the people's life became even more destitute. In the financial field, from 1940 to early 1945, the French colonialists supplied to the Japanese 720 million (Indochinese) piasters robbed from the Indochinese people, not mentioning the 780 million exacted by the Japanese from the Bank of Indochina, and 72 million francs in the form of "fund-raising" from the population[5]. As regards food, from 1941 to 1944 the Japanese sent to their home islands 3.6 million tons of food grain, in addition to the food supplied to the tens of thousands of their soldiers stationed in Indochina. Moreover, the Japanese militarists applied a war-time economic policy: monetary inflation, paddy requisition, forcible growing of jute and castor-oil plants instead of rice to serve their war industry. That cruel rule of the Japanese militarists and their stooges drove our people to the most terrible famine known in our history. Between late 1944 and early 1945 two million people died of starvation in the Bac Bo plain and Binh Tri Thien provinces alone — nearly one-tenth of the Vietnamese population at that time and many times the number of the victims of the two US atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Although our people were subjected to repression, white terror, obscurantism and misinformation — e.g. the claim that the "Soviet Army could not resist more than 2 months" — our Party persisted in stepping up the struggle against fascism and supporting the Soviet Union, actively preparing our forces for the opportunity to seize power. Late in 1944, and early in 1945, the war against fascism and militarism entered its last stage. In October 1944, basing himself on reports of Soviet victories in Stalingrad and Koursk Comrade Ho Chi Minh saw the opportunity coming for a general insurrection. In a letter to fellow-countrymen throughout the country he said: "The aggressors are on the verge of destruction. The Allies are approaching final victory. The opportunity for our nation to liberate itself will come in a year's or a year and a half's time. Time presses. We must act quickly." In Indochina the situation was complex. With the support of Britain and the USA as its allies, the De Gaulle Government acted frenziedly to restore French colonialist domination on Indochina. On 9 March 1945, the Japanese militarists overthrew the French in Indochina in anticipation of an Allied landing. The Vietnamese traitors, while currying favour with their new masters and swearing loyalty to the Japanese Emperor, tried to contact their former masters, the French colonialists. In this context, our Party clear-sightedly assessed the situation and held that the direct and sole enemy of the Vietnamese revolution then was the Japanese militarists, but at the same time warned that we had to be highly vigilant in face of the French colonialists' scheme of restoring their domination on Indochina when the Japanese surrendered to the Allies. The most favourable objective conditions for a general insurrection to seize power throughout the country would come when Allied troops landed in Indochina to fight the Japanese. However, "should the Japanese revolution break out and the Japanese people's revolutionary power be established, or should Japan be occupied as France was in 1940 and the morale of the Japanese expeditionary forces collapse, then even before any landing by Allied troops it would be possible for a general insurrection to break out and triumph"[6]. Acting upon this directive, Party organizations throughout the country strove to build up armed forces and organize political forces, expand guerilla warfare, and enlarge the liberated areas in order to create a strong posture for the revolutionary forces.

The decisive victories of the Soviet Union on the Soviet-German front and in Asia and the Pacific region which compelled the Hitlerite fascists and the Japanese militarists to surrender unconditionally not only greatly encouraged our revolutionary movement but also created a most favourable direct revolutionary opportunity for the liberation of our nation. Implementing the order for general insurrection to seize power throughout the country issued by the Party National Conference on 13 August 1945 and this directive of President Ho Chi Minh: "Now that the opportunity has come, we must resolutely win back national independence whatever the sacrifices even if we have to set the Truong Son range on fire", a revolutionary storm broke out from north to south. Within two weeks, from 14 to 25 August 1945, our people, led by our Party, skilfully combined political with armed struggle, rapidly overthrew the administrative machinery of the Japanese militarists, the French colonialists and their stooges, and established revolutionary power throughout the country.

On the other hand, the 1939 — 1945 revolutionary upsurge climaxing in the August Revolution in Vietnam was a component of the movement against the war of aggression by fascism and militarism throughout the world.

The lesson of the struggle against fascism and war in those years reminds us that in face of the scheme by imperialism and the reactionary forces to impose a protracted war upon nations, a fundamental task for revolutionaries and progressive people in all countries is to get their people to take their destiny into their own hands, hold aloft the banner of peace and revolution, and thwart all schemes and acts of war and agression by imperialism and international reaction.

(Excerpts from an address to the Symposium on "The Epochal Significance of the Victory over Hitlerite fascism and Japanese militarism" held in Hanoi on 27 and 28 March 1985)

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1. Documents of the Party 1930 — 1945, Vol. III, Su That Publishing House, Hanoi, 1977, pp. 33, 53, 54.

2. Ho Chi Minh: Selected Works, Vol. I, Su That Publishing House, Hanoi, 1980, p. 353.

3. Documents of the Party 1930 — 1945, Vol. III, Su That Publishing House, Hanoi, 1977, p. 287.

4. Ho Chi Minh: Selected Works, Vol. I, Su That Publishing House, Hanoi, 1980, p. 354.

5. J. Decock: A la barre de l'Indochine (At the helm of Indochina), Editions Plon, Paris, p. 446.

6. Documents of the Party 1930 — 1945, Vol. III, Su That Publishing House, Hanoi, 1977, pp. 392, 393.

30th BIRTHDAY OF THE LAO PEOPLE'S REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

Interview granted by Kaysone Phomvihane, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Lao People's Revolutionary Party, to the correspondents in Laos of Vietnam News Agency, the Voice of Vietnam radio and Vietnamese Television.

Question: On 22 March 1985, the Lao People's Revolutionary Party is 30 years old. Will you tell us about the main achievements obtained by the Lao Army and people under the Party's leadership?

Answer: Over the past thirty years, in their revolutionary struggle marked by hardships and sacrifices as well as glorious victories, the LPRP has always stood in the van of the struggle and has proved worthy of its role as fighting vanguard of the working class and people of all nationalities in Laos.

Continuing the glorious historical mission of the Indochinese Communist Party founded and trained by the great President Ho Chi Minh and loyal to the interests of the Lao working class and nation the LPRP has, right from its foundation, constantly held high the banner of national independence and socialism, creatively applied Marxism — Leninism to the practical conditions of the country and mapped out a correct revolutionary line to lead the Lao people of all nationalities to overcome innumerable difficulties and trials and achieve great successes of strategic, historic and epochal significance.

In the days when it was a section of the Indochinese Communist Party, the LPRP already led the people of all nationalities in Laos in a resolute fight against the rule of the French colonialists and Japanese fascists. In 1945, in the favourable circumstances brought about by the great victory of the Soviet Union and the other anti-fascist forces in the world, and in coordination with the August Insurrection of the Vietnamese people, the Lao people under the leadership of the LPRP rose up, seized power and proclaimed independence on 12 October 1945.

This was followed by a nine-year war of resistance against the French aggressors. Having sustained heavy defeats in all battlefields of Indochina culminating in the Dien Bien Phu debacle, the French had to sign the 1954 Geneva Agreements whereby they recognized the independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Laos, Vietnam and Kampuchea. Regarding Laos in particular, they recognized the legitimacy of the Lao revolutionary forces and the latter's direct control over Hua Phan and Phongsaly provinces, where they regrouped. This marked the end of French old-type colonialism in Laos and the rest of the Indochinese peninsula. It gave a strong boost to the national spirit of the Lao people of all nationalities and created the basic conditions for them to build and develop their forces in all fields in preparation for a new period of struggle.

On 22 March 1955, implementing the resolution of the Second Congress of the Indochinese Communist Party on the founding of a Marxist-Leninist Party in each country of Indochina, a congress attended by more than 400 Lao communists founded the Lao People's Party (renamed Lao People's Revolutionary Party at its second congress in 1972). Right after its founding, the LPRP took upon itself the sacred mission of leading the Lao people of all nationalities to wage a new struggle shoulder to shoulder with the fraternal peoples of Vietnam and Kampuchea, in which they were determined to defeat the aggressive war of the US imperialists, the most truculent chieftain of imperialism and one with the biggest military and economic potentials in the imperialist camp. Applying a correct political and military line, the Party mobilized to the fullest extent the strength of the entire nation and combined it with the strength of the strategic alliance of the three Indochinese countries, that of the socialist community, and that of our time. It surmounted the hardest trials and most complex situations met with in the course of the revolution, now concentrating on political struggle, now on armed struggle and now combining the two. Three times it participated in a coalition government and successively frustrated all strategies and all forms of war devised by the US imperialists and their henchmen, continually and steadily reinforcing the posture and strength of the Lao revolution in close coordination with the anti-US resistance of the Vietnamese and Kampuchean peoples. It finally won glorious victory, completely liberated the country, abolished the outmoded monarchy, and on 2 December 1975 founded the Lao People's Democratic Republic, an independent and sovereign State, a member of the socialist community and an outpost of socialism in Southeast Asia. The glorious victory of the anti-US resistance for national salvation opened up a new era for the Lao people, the era of national independence, unity, and socialism.

But hardly had the country been completely liberated and while the Lao people were concentrating their efforts on overcoming the serious consequences of 30 years of war when they had to confront a new enemy: the Chinese great-power expansionists and hegemonists acting in collusion with the US imperialists and other international reactionary forces, especially the ultra-rightist reactionaries in the ruling circles in Thailand. They have been conducting a multi-faceted war of sabotage against the revolution in Laos

as well as against fraternal Vietnam and Kampuchea.

Striving to take our poor and backward country, one with an as yet undeveloped economy, direct to socialism, bypassing the stage of capitalist development, while having to cope with the wicked schemes of the enemy is indeed an extremely difficult and complex task. But over the last ten years, under the correct and clearsighted leadership of the Party, the people of all nationalities in Laos have held fast to their traditions of patriotism and self-reliance and made the most of the potentials of their country while winning international support and assistance, first of all from Vietnam, the Soviet Union and other brother socialist countries. They have won big and allround successes in the fulfilment of the two strategic tasks of defending the homeland and building socialism. Defence and security have been ensured. Proletarian dictatorship has been strengthened. The Party, administration and mass organizations at all levels have been continually reinforced. Important successes have been recorded in economic restoration, transformation and development and in cultural development. Food output has nearly doubled compared with the pre-liberation days. Thanks to this, we have become basically self-sufficient in food with an average of 350 kilogrammes of paddy per head of population. Vigorous development has been observed in industry, handicrafts, communications, postal service, culture, education and health care. Electricity-generating capacity has increased fivefold. Illiteracy has been wiped out in the whole of the country and one-fourth of the population is studying in general-education, vocational and higher education schools. The number of graduates from senior high schools, vocational schools and universities in 1984 exceeded 6,000. Party membership has almost doubled compared with the figure on the day of liberation. The number of economic managers and scientific and technical workers has grown by leaps and bounds to the present figure of more than 40,000 of whom more than 5,000 hold university and post-graduate degrees. The material and cultural life of the people of all nationalities in the country has improved markedly.

We have also recorded important successes on the political and diplomatic fronts. The militant alliance and the special solidarity and allround cooperation between Laos and Vietnam and between Laos, Vietnam and Kampuchea has seen a new qualitative and in-depth development. Likewise, our solidarity and allround cooperation with the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries has been growing steadily. Friendly countries and progressive forces in the world have understood us ever better and given ever bigger support to our revolutionary cause.

The great successes which our people have recorded during the past 30 years have strengthened our people's confidence in the leadership of the LPRP. They have helped strengthen national solidarity, the militant alliance of Laos with Vietnam and Kampuchea and the whole socialist community, and have actively contributed to the common struggle for peace and stability in the region. These successes have also helped raise the position and prestige of the Lao People's Democratic Republic in the international arena.

At present, our people are engaged in a stirring emulation movement to fulfil the tasks set by the third congress of the Party and achieve the targets of the yearly plan and the first five-year plan (1981 — 85) in order to provide a firm basis for the building and implementation of the second five-year plan (1986 — 90) with a view to advancing the work of national construction and defence.

Looking back over the past 30 years we see that many deep-reaching changes have taken place in our country. Time will pass but the memory of these exploits will live forever with our mountains and rivers. They are the legitimate pride of our people under the leadership of their glorious Party.

Question: Will you elaborate on the new development of the friendship, militant alliance and solidarity and allround cooperation between Laos and Vietnam?

Answer: Laos and Vietnam are two fraternal countries bound by longstanding ties of friendship. With the birth of the Indochinese Communist Party founded and trained by our great comrade Ho Chi Minh, this relationship has developed to an even higher qualitative level and has become a special relationship and a model of loyal friendship rarely seen in history.

Throughout the two long and hard resistance wars, first against the French then against the US imperialists, the Vietnamese people constantly stood by the side of the Lao people "sharing with them every grain of rice and every bit of vegetable" and have shrunk at no hardships and sacrifices to help the Lao revolution gain final victory.

In the past years, although they are just out of more than 30 years of continual war and have to face many difficulties in the building and development of their economy and culture and to cope with a multi-faceted war of sabotage and the threat of aggression by the Chinese great-power expansionists and hegemonists, the Vietnamese people have continued to supply Laos with manpower, materials and equipment, not even sparing their blood to contribute to the defence of Laos and the building of socialism in our country. This brotherly and comradely cooperation between our two Parties, Governments and peoples have developed in all spheres and in a very diversified and effective way. Besides sending experts and army volunteers to help the Lao revolution Vietnam has provided manpower and technical assistance to help Laos tap its natural resources. The two countries have also expanded cooperation and established ties of sworn brotherhood between each other's border provinces which will develop economic and cultural cooperation as a basis for cooperation in other fields. This great cooperation and assistance has been very important in creating a strong strategic posture for Laos and constitutes a crucial factor for the development of the Lao revolution.

GREAT VICTORIES OF THE KAMPUCHEAN REVOLUTIONARY ARMED FORCES OVER THE KAMPUCHEAN REACTIONARIES

In close coordination with Vietnamese volunteer troops and with the support of the entire Kampuchean people, in the 1984—85 dry season, the Kampuchean People's Revolutionary Army successively overran all positions of the Kampuchean reactionaries located in the Kampuchean—Thai border area.

According to the Kampuchean news agency SPK, the revolutionary armed forces wiped out more than ten thousand enemy troops, captured hundreds of others, and seized about 15,000 weapons of various types, many depots, and hundreds of tons of food supplies. They shot down one Thai plane which violated Kampuchean airspace to give support to the Kampuchean reactionaries, captured and destroyed 24 trucks and many depots containing thousands of tons of weapons, ammunition and military equipment.

Typical of those actions are some highly effective attacks on very important enemy positions:

— From 4 to 5 January 1985, while attacking an enemy military base on the Kampuchean—Lao—Thai border, the revolutionary forces wiped out over 900 enemy troops; capture over 100 others, seized 4,220 weapons, 400 tons of ammunition, 7 electric generators, 14 trucks, 100 bicycles, 50 tons of rice and salt, one depot of military equipment, one of ammunition and three others of food supplies.

— On 7 January, the so-called "Command post" of Son Sann forces located at Ampil, northwest of Siem Reap—Oddar Mean Chey province, was attacked. The revolutionary forces wiped out 500 enemy troops, wounding and disbanding 1,500 others; seized 350 weapons, two ammunition depots and large quantities of military equipment.

— From 8 to 11 February, the so-called "Headquarters" of Pol Pot forces located on the western fringe of Pursat province was attacked. The revolutionary forces wiped out 220 enemy troops, seized 1,177 weapons, 13 trucks, 75 tons of ammunition and mines, 88 tons of food, 5 tons of spare parts for military vehicles and radio transmitters, 3 depots of spare parts for military vehicles and radio transmitters, 3 depots of medicines, and a large quantity of other military equipment.

— In mid-February, the Phnom Malai base, the so-called "capital" of the three groups of reactionaries also came under attack. The revolutionary forces wiped out 80 enemy troops, seized 250 weapons, 15 tons of food, and 2 depots of ammunition and rice, and a large quantity of military equipment.

— On 5 March, the Sihanouk H.Q. in eastern Chong Chorm (called Ta Tum base by Western agencies) was attacked. The revolutionary forces annihilated 1,200 enemy troops, including one major general, wounded over one thousand others, seized 1,500 weapons and a quantity of military equipment, destroyed 11 trucks, 400 guns, 20 tons of ammunition and a depot of military equipment.

We shall constantly educate our cadres, Party members, and our entire people and drive home to them the fact that the Vietnamese revolution is the mainstay in the alliance and solidarity between the three Indochinese countries. Therefore, it is the duty of the entire Lao Party, Army and people to support and unite with Vietnam and to regard each victory and achievement of the Vietnamese people as their own. We have constantly called on all sections of the Lao people to do their utmost to put into effect the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation between the two countries and the Declaration of the Indochinese Summit Conference held in February 1983.

The Lao people, from generation to generation, will forever remember the great services rendered by the Vietnamese people, the sacrifices endured by them and their noble contributions to the revolutionary cause of Laos. The solidarity, alliance and cooperation between Laos and Vietnam and between the three Indochinese countries has become a law governing our existence and development, a decisive factor for the successes of the revolution in each country. It has become the strategic line, the sacred sentiment and the glorious internationalist duty of the Party, Government and people of Laos. It is one of the criteria of revolutionary virtues for our Party cadres and members and entire people. The entire Party, people and Army of Laos pledge to do all they can to safeguard and enhance the Laos—Vietnam and Laos—Vietnam—Kampuchea special solidarity. Never shall we allow any reactionary force to violate this sacred legacy built with the sweat and blood of so many cadres, fighters and people of our two countries under the leadership of our two Parties. On the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the foundation of the LPRP I once again wish to express our sincere and profound gratitude to the Party, Government, people and Army of fraternal Vietnam for their great and effective support and assistance to the revolutionary cause of our people. Through the Vietnam News Agency, and the radio and television of Vietnam I wish to convey my warm regards to Vietnamese families whose members have laid down their lives or have been wounded while fighting for the Lao revolution. I also extend my heartfelt greetings to the families of Vietnamese cadres, fighters and workers who have done or are doing their internationalist duty in Laos.

THE FOURTH WITHDRAWAL OF VIETNAMESE VOLUNTEER TROOPS FROM KAMPUCHEA

The Summit Conference of the Three Indochinese Countries held in February 1983 stated: "Every year a partial withdrawal of Vietnamese volunteer troops from Kampuchea will be decided upon on the basis of an examination of the situation in Kampuchea." Acting upon this statement and the communiqué of the 10th Conference of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Vietnam, Laos and Kampuchea held in January 1985, and considering the growing strength of the Kampuchean revolution, especially the great victories won in the 1984-85 dry season, the Ministry of National Defence of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and the Ministry of National Defence of the People's Republic of Kampuchea decided to withdraw another contingent of Vietnamese volunteer troops from Kampuchea. This withdrawal began in early April and was to end in early May. It involved Combat Group 52 comprising one infantry division, four technical brigades, and three infantry brigades.

This is the fourth troop withdrawal in three years. It has an important significance.

It proves that the Kampuchean revolutionary armed forces have grown rapidly in strength, that national defence has been considerably reinforced, and that security in Kampuchea has been consolidated with every passing day. In the 1984 — 85 dry season, many strongholds of remnants of the Kampuchean reactionary forces along the Kampuchean — Thai border were destroyed; thousands of enemy troops were annihilated; hundreds of tons of weapons and food were destroyed or seized by the revolutionary armed forces. Enemy troops operating inside the country were hunted down, thousands of them have crossed over to the people's side. The reactionary forces are deprived of all bases in Kampuchea. They are in extreme confusion; their ranks are rent by division and discord.

This is the greatest and heaviest failure in the past six years of the Kampuchean reactionaries and their masters — China acting in collusion with the US imperialists and the ultra-rightist reactionaries in Thailand. These military exploits won in coordinated action with Vietnamese volunteer troops prove that the Kampuchean revolutionary army has been rapidly gaining in strength. The Kampuchean regular army, local troops and militia and guerilla forces have developed both quantitatively and qualitatively. Kampuchean divisions and regiments at the front, fighting in close coordination with Vietnamese troops, have shown resourcefulness and bravery, and demonstrated high combat effectiveness in both concerted and separate actions. Local troops and militia forces with the support of the population have hunted down enemy agents and maintained security in hamlets and villages. Agitation work among enemy troops has caused many of them to cross over to the side of the revolution.

This renewed withdrawal of a large number of Vietnamese troops from Kampuchea testifies to the Vietnamese and Kampuchean Governments' and peoples' just stand and goodwill attitude and shows that they are striving for peace and stability in Southeast Asia.

Inspired by ardent desire for peace and stability in Southeast Asia, Vietnam, Kampuchea and Laos have time and again reaffirmed their readiness to enter into negotiations with the nations concerned for a settlement of the problem comprising the following:

— Withdrawal of Vietnamese army volunteers from Kampuchea in conjuction with the elimination of the genocidal Pol Pot clique;

— Respect for the Kampuchean people's right to self-determination, first of all their right to work for Kampuchea's revival without any threat of a return of the genocidal regime;

— Free general elections in Kampuchea in the presence of foreign observers;

— Building Southeast Asia into a region of peace and stability in which nations with different social systems will co-exist peacefully and will not allow their territories to be used to oppose other nations;

— The national rights of the Southeast Asian countries to be respected by all countries;

All agreements reached to be implemented under international guarantee and supervision.

The three Indochinese countries reiterate their proposal to convene an international conference on all questions concerning peace and stability in Southeast Asia with the participation of the countries in and outside the region which are directly concerned or have made contributions to peace and stability in the region.

Nhan Dan daily
2 April 1985

Hanoi's Viewpoint

ANOTHER MAJOR PEACE INITIATIVE OF THE SOVIET UNION

The interview granted by Comrade Mikhail Sergeyevich Gorbachov, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, published by **Pravda** on 7 April 1985 has had wide repercussions across the world and has drawn great interest. In this important statement, M.S. Gorbachov laid stress on the urgent need, in the present world situation, to build international relationships based on the principle of peaceful coexistence and to promote international cooperation in order to conduct dialogues and arrive at decisions that would actually ease world tension and help check the arms race. The recent plenum of the Central Committee of the CPSU further demonstrates that the Soviet Union has pursued and is pursuing an active and constructive foreign policy aimed at consolidating peace. On Soviet — American relations, M.S. Gorbachov said, the Soviet Union is of the view that the improvement of these relations is not only an imperative necessity but also a feasible endeavour, of course if it is conducted on a reciprocal basis. He stressed the necessity to seriously work on this relationship at the summit level. To create an atmosphere favourable for bilateral talks, he proposed that the Soviet Union and the United States introduce for the entire duration of the talks a moratorium on the development, including research, testing and deployment, of strike space arms and freeze their strategic offensive arms. At the same time, he added, the deployment of American intermediate-range missiles in Europe should be terminated and, correspondingly, the build-up of the Soviet reply measures. The Soviet Union is for an honest dialogue and is prepared to demonstrate its goodwill again. As a token of its goodwill, the Soviet Union is introducing a moratorium on the deployment of its intermediate-range missiles and suspending the implementation of other reply measures in Europe. The duration of the moratorium is till November of this year. The decision to be made after that depends on whether the United States follows our example, the Soviet leader stressed.

Public opinion in the world including that in the Western countries has welcomed the stand and attitude of the Soviet Union as expounded in M.S. Gorbachov's statement. This statement highlights the high sense of responsibility of the Soviet Union before the destiny of nations, its great concern and untiring efforts for international peace and security.

By its new proposals, the Soviet Union has paved the way for a correct solution to this burning question facing mankind: a substantial reduction of the existing weapons, the initial elimination of a considerable part of these weapons, no development of new weapon systems in space as well as on the ground, and the gradual complete elimination of the danger of nuclear war from this planet. At the present juncture in the world these proposals of the Soviet Union assume an extremely great significance. They meet the burning demand of the world's people who want peace to be preserved and who oppose the arms race and the danger of nuclear war which is seriously threatening peace and the security of nations.

Together with the whole of peace-loving mankind, the Vietnamese people unanimously support the correct stand and goodwill attitude of the Soviet Union. We hold that the negative response of the Reagan Administration to the new proposals of the Soviet Union proves that the United States is not matching words with deeds. Washington claims that it, too, is concerned for peace and wishes to arrive at an agreement on a substantial reduction of armaments. But facts show that the US Administration is concerned only with continuing the arms race, developing and deploying more strategic nuclear weapons, and carrying on its "star wars" programme. There has been no meaningful act as yet on the part of the United States that could give rise to hopes. On the contrary, the USA has committed a series of actions which have given cause to legitimate alarms in public opinion.

THE GLORIOUS REVOLUTIONARY CAUSE OF THE SALVADOREAN PEOPLE

Fifty-five years ago, on 28 March 1930, the Communist Party of El Salvador was founded. It was the first revolutionary organization of the Salvadorean people and comprised the most resolute fighters, mostly workers. Agustin Farabundo Marti, the outstanding internationalist fighter, was its first leader. He fought together with Angusto Sera Sandino and the Nicaraguan people against the US imperialists and the Somoza dictatorial regime.

Since its foundation, developing the national patriotic tradition, the Communist Party of El Salvador has always held high the banner of unity and resolutely struggle for national and social liberation.

In the early 1970's, the armed struggle movement of the Salvadorean people further developed. Many revolutionary organizations with a political and military character were set up, among them the People's Liberation Forces, the People's Revolutionary Army, and others. They fought against their common enemies, the US imperialists and their henchmen, for national independence and freedom. The Communist Party and other revolutionary organizations gradually came together and on 10 October 1980 were united in the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front.

In recent years, the vigorous revolutionary struggle of the Salvadorean people under the leadership of the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front has won great successes. The people of El Salvador, with their rich experience of 460 years of anti-colonialist and anti-imperialist struggle, will certainly close their ranks even more tightly and take their revolutionary cause forward.

On the occasion of the 55th founding anniversary of the Communist Party of El Salvador, the Vietnamese people affirm their staunch solidarity with the heroic Salvadorean people in their struggle for national independence and freedom.

INTERVIEW WITH CULTURE MINISTER NGUYEN VAN HIEU

Question: We have just observed the 10th anniversary of the liberation of our southern provinces and are about to mark the 40th anniversary of the August Revolution and the foundation of our Republic. Will you tell our readers about the cultural achievements of our State with a view to decolonization?

Answer: The liberation of our southern provinces crowned a 30-year war of independence against the French colonialists, then the American imperialists. Thus, to begin with, let us note that parallel with armed resistance against foreign aggressions, we have conducted a consistent ideological and cultural revolution based on Marxism — Leninism.

With a view to cultural decolonization, as soon as the people's power was established, we made great efforts to liquidate illiteracy and combat ignorance while promoting a cultural revolution serving the toiling people with this watchword: Nation — Science — Masses. It was a motto put forward by the Indochinese Communist Party in its Cultural Programme in 1943.

During the anti-French war of resistance, while the aggressor introduced into the occupied zones a depraved and enslaving culture, in the free areas, there blossomed a wholesome mass culture which grew ever more vigorous and bore the stamp of humanism and patriotism. This culture flourished in the liberated North in the ten-year interlude between the two wars of resistance (1955 — 64) and became a revolutionary, national, democratic and socialist-oriented culture.

Unlike French colonialism, which essentially resorted to obscurantism vis-à-vis the popular masses and focused its cultural influence on certain privileged urban strata, American neo-colonialism conducted in the South of our country, parallel to armed aggression, a large-scale and systematic cultural aggression aimed at implanting the "American way of life" whose consequences are still remembered. Aided by American handouts, an American-style "consumer culture" was quickly imposed: it appealed to man's base instincts, instigated a rat race inspired by pleasure — and profit-seeking, and incited crime.

The neo-colonial administration, while feigning hostility to all ideologies, in fact was forging its own. It gave a free rein to the propagation of pragmatism, existentialism, personalism, neo-positivism and other reactionary philosophical doctrines and cultivated a psychology of pleasure-seeking, selfishness, egocentrism, mercantilism, cynicism..., for people more or less refractory to its efforts of conquest, apolitism and pessimism. Washington was not satisfied with introducing such a culture from the outside; it strove to create one on the spot by organizing an army of native cultural mercenaries working in all fields: literature and art, education, propaganda and agitation... The means used, first and foremost the mass media, were colossal. Genuine men of culture trembled with fear for the survival of national and human values; parents for the future of their children.

In the ten years since the liberation of the South, we have successfully overcome the very serious sequels of neo-colonialism, especially illiteracy, drug-addiction, prostitution, gangsterism, superstitions, loose morals... To this end, we have made the social environment more wholesome politically and economically and caused our new culture to make progress. By now, in the whole country, the bases of a modern Vietnamese culture have been established. It encompasses nearly all branches of universal culture: literature, fine arts, music, performing arts, choreography, cinema... We attach great importance to mass culture, which our enemies disparagingly call "culture at a discount". It is precisely by actively working among the toiling masses, who are at the same time the beneficiaries and the conscious authors of our

new culture, that our cultural workers, I mean the professionals, will carry out decolonization in their field.

Question: Our forefathers, in order to express their attachment to national identity, liked to recall our "four thousand years of culture". What is the revolutionary power's attitude toward our age-old national cultural heritage?

Answer: The revolutionary power holds in great respect all national values, both material and spiritual, forged in the course of the centuries. In our view, socialist revolution has nothing to do with vandalism, nor, more generally, with nihilism. Far from advocating a break with tradition, it strives to perpetuate what is best in tradition in a spirit of historical continuity. Our State ever since its creation has undertaken to this end work on a scale hitherto unknown in our history, the more so since it is a multi-national State. Its policy in this field consists in revalorizing the cultural patrimonies of all ethnic groups living on its territory, not only that of the Viet, the majority nationality, but also those of the 53 minority nationalities living either in concentrated or scattered fashion in the North, the Centre and the South. It paves the way for the cultural development of each of those human communities in every respect: language, literature and art, customs and habits... For all the fraternal ethnic groups to contribute on an equal footing to the blossoming of the multinational Vietnamese culture, we regard as absolutely alien to us the assimilation of one culture by another.

Our research institutes, cultural services at all levels, museums, theatres, cinema enterprises... our art ensembles, both professional and amateur, our publishing houses and libraries..., with their bodies of cadres sprung from various ethnic backgrounds, have greatly contributed to the revalorization and developement of our many national cultures, including those of ethnic minorities formerly threatened with extinction under the old regimes. Such an undertaking, an immense one, let's keep this in mind, is being carried out on the basis of scientific norms and a judicious selection, aiming at social progress and common objectives shared with other branches of activity in the building of socialism.

Let me add this: modern Vietnamese culture, socialist in content and national in character, does not only seek to inherit traditional Vietnamese culture but also claims to absorb the accomplishments of human culture, holding in high esteem the moral and spiritual values of other peoples in the world, with a reserve put on cultural cosmopolitism which, we believe, is another evil to be combated in addition to cultural chauvinism.

Question: On the basis of the principles you have just stated, how do you view our cultural cooperation with other countries?

Answer: Let me begin with our relationships with our neighbours within the Indochinese community. The three peoples of Indochina have sealed their brotherhood-in-arms in the course of a century-old struggle against foreign aggressors, for the conquest then the defence of national independence and at present for the building of socialism. The Communist Party of Vietnam, the People's Revolutionary Party of Laos, and the People's Revolutionary Party of Kampuchea, which are leading the socialist revolution in their respective countries, all spring from the same stock: the Indochinese Communist Party which led the Indochinese revolution from 1930 to 1951. With about the same starting-point on the road of socialist building, our respective societies must carry out in concert a triple revolution, in relations of production, in culture and ideology, and in science and technology.

The ideological and cultural revolution in particular, as it is being conducted in the three Indochinese countries, follow the universal principles of Marxism — Leninism. Vietnamese, Lao and Kampuchean cultures may at a first glance show notable differences.

It is none the less true that they share a common origin and a common fund, which belong to austro-asiatic cultures. Due to these common traits and Indochinese solidarity, cultural cooperation among the Indochinese countries has all conditions to bear fruit.

As a matter of fact, cultural cooperation and exchanges between the three Indochinese countries have continued over a number of years and encompass nearly all branches of activity: plastic arts, music, choreography, circus, drama, cinema, library and archives, publishing, printing, museum and conservation, exhibition, mass culture, cadre training... Traditional music and dance festivals of Indochinese countries, held in Phnom Penh in 1982, in Vientiane in 1983, and in Nha Trang (Vietnam) in 1984 achieved great success. The first Conference of Culture Ministers of the Indochinese Countries, held in Phnom Penh in April 1984, adopted important resolution on the combination of efforts to build for each Indochinese country a new culture, socialist in content and national and popular in character,

and to effectively struggle against penetration by decadent and reactionary cultures. Vietnam, which is one step ahead of the two fraternal countries in socialist building, continues to give them all necessary assistance to this end, in an internationalist spirit.

Likewise, we attach prime importance to cultural cooperation with the other socialist countries, members of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance, first of all with the Land of Soviets, the pioneer in socialist revolution and the mainstay of the world socialist community. In our cultural work we are inspired by Lenin's teachings and Soviet experiences. We are also grateful to the Soviet Union for the effective material and technical assistance it has been giving to the building of our modern culture. Our common efforts on the cultural plane are part of the comprehensive cooperation inaugurated by the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation between the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics signed on 3 November 1978 and developing ever since then. Following the "Days of Soviet Culture" organized in Vietnam in December 1982 on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the foundation of the USSR, next May will see the opening in the Land of Soviets of "Days of Vietnamese Culture" marking great anniversaries of the Vietnamese revolution. A delegation of 250 Vietnamese artists and cultural workers will present to the Soviet public the peculiar features of traditional Vietnamese culture and the cultural achievements recorded over the past forty years in a former colony which has opted for the socialist road, bypassing the stage of capitalist development.

A resolute partisan of peaceful coexistence and international cooperation the Socialist Republic of Vietnam is for the establishment and tightening of cultural ties with all countries of the world, regardless of political regime, in the interest of all.

We are very conscious of our geographical and ethno-linguistic ties to Southeast Asia. That is why we wish to develop and, why not, gradually systematize our cultural contacts with Indonesia, Malaysia, the other ASEAN countries and Burma, those close neighbours with undeniable affinities to us. India, with its marvellous, universally recognized, culture, has always shown sympathy to our cause and one can measure the prospects of multiform cooperation between our two republics by the success of the official visit to the country of Mahatma Gandhi by Le Duan, General Secretary of the Communist Party of Vietnam, in September 1984. France, once French colonialism eliminated, remains our friend — didn't its great people extend whole-hearted support to ours at difficult moments? — and fruitful cooperation between the two parties can be hoped for. The same holds true for Australia and Sweden, to mention only these two, which are among our new friends. The situation in the world is getting better and one may believe that the time will come when our relations with the United States and even with China will be normalized, on the basis of mutual respect of national independence and sovereignty, in the common interest of the parties concerned and that of the great human community. ●

20th TRADITION DAY OF THE VIETNAM PEOPLE'S AIR FORCE

On 3 April 1965, for the first time in the history of the armed struggle of Vietnam an air battle took place against enemy forces. Over Ham Rong in Thanh Hoa province, two flights of MIG 17 fighter planes of the Red Star Wing, engaged US aircraft for the first time and shot down 4 of them — two F.105's and two F.8's. The 3rd of April became the annual Tradition Day of the Vietnam People's Air Force.

Born and growing up in the confrontation with the powerful US Air Force, the Vietnamese Air Force has quickly developed and matured.

In February 1964, the Red Star Wing, the first unit of MIG 17 fighter planes of Vietnam was founded.

In April 1967, the Air Force became a division of our military forces.

In May 1977, it became a full-fledged branch of national defence.

The Vietnamese Air Force recorded resounding exploits in the resistance war against the US imperialists. It shot down 320 US aircraft of 19 types, including RB.66's and B.52's; captured 90 US pilots; damaged and sank six US warships. In the Ho Chi Minh Campaign, a flight used aircraft captured from the enemy to attack Tan Son Nhat Airport on 28 April 1975, thus contributing to the quick collapse of the US puppet regime.

After the liberation of South Vietnam and the reunification of the country, the Vietnam People's Air Force participated in the defense of our southwestern and northern borders, carried out its internationalist obligation, and built itself into a modern air force.

In the past 20 years, the Vietnamese Air Force has trained a large number of excellent pilots, talented commanders and skilled technicians. It has accumulated rich experience; worked out original methods of fighting; mastered the use of modern equipment and weapons; and shown itself an effective air force.

Hai Phong City

NGO NHAT QUANG

1. Basic data

In the past, Hai Phong consisted solely of the inner city area. On 1 January 1963, the former province of Kien An became part of it, and later on it was the turn of a part of Yen Hung district of Quang Yen province. Thus, the city has now vast suburban areas with ricefields, sea and forest.

— Area: 1,503 sq. km.

— Population: 1,264,400 (841 per sq. km).

— Administrative divisions: Hai Phong has three inner districts (Hong Bang, Ngo Quyen and Le Chan) and seven outer districts (Thuy Nguyen, An Hai, Tien Lang, Vinh Bao, Kien An and Do Son).

2. Geographical features

2.1. Topography

Located in the northeast of the Bac Bo delta, between 20°35' and 21°01' north latitude, and 106°29' and 107°5' east longitude, Hai Phong has common boundaries with several other provinces. To the north is Quang Ninh, to the west Hai Hung, to the south Thai Binh, and to the east is the sea. The city comprises one mainland part and one maritime part with many islands, the biggest being Cat Ba (24 km long and 18 km wide).

The mainland part is 36 km long and 28 km wide.

It is 104 km away from Hanoi and 1,848 km from Ho Chi Minh City.

Lying between the mouths of the Luc Dau River system, most of the mainland part is crisscrossed by rivers and canals. This part includes some mountain areas such as Mount Phu Lien in Kien An with a meteorological station and the Do Son hills which formerly were islands, but were later linked to the mainland by alluvial deposits.

2.2. Climate

Located near the sea, Hai Phong is cooler than other provinces of the Red River delta. In summer and autumn, cool southeasterly monsoon blows. In October, the city is frequently visited by strong winds. Do Son town, 20 km from the city, has many beautiful beaches.

2.3. Communications

Roads: Hai Phong lies at the junction of two main arteries: Highway 5 linking Hanoi and Haiphong: 103 km; Highway 10 passing through 5 outer districts of Haiphong and linking the Quang Ninh coal-mining province in the north to rice-growing Thai Binh in the south.

Waterways: Haiphong is linked to Hanoi, Dap Cau district town, Bac Giang provincial town of Ha Bac province and Quang Yen district town of Quang Ninh province by river.

Sea communications: Haiphong is linked to Mong Cai district town through the beautiful Ha Long Bay, to Central and Southern ports, and to foreign countries by sea.

Railways: The Hanoi — Haiphong line is 102 km long.

3. History

3.1. A new city

Archaeological finds excavated so far show that people came to settle in this seaside area as early as the Neolithic Age. It was recorded in ancient annals that this was the site of a thriving fishing village called Cam.

In 1870, the Hue Imperial Court ordered the setting up here of a "commercial agency" for business transactions with foreign ships, and a military post for the defence of the coast.

After occupying Cochinchina (southern Vietnam) in 1862, the French colonialists sent agents to reconnoitre the Ha Long Bay and Haiphong areas.

Under the pressure of the French colonialists, on 15 March 1874, the Hue Imperial Court had to sign with France a Treaty agreeing "not to sign any trade treaty with any country without informing the French Government in advance and to cede Haiphong and the control of its port to France".

Using this port city as a springboard, the French colonialists were able to occupy the whole of northern Vietnam later on.

Starting in 1883 they began to build this fishing village into a military and commercial port, but not until 1930 — 1932 was the building of Haiphong port basically completed. However, as far as technical equipment was concerned there were only two mechanical cranes. The loading and unloading of goods was almost totally done by manual labour.

The building of the port went together with that of the city. First, projects serving the colonial policy of exploitation were carried out. Streets were built and the population swelled. The crescent-shaped city grew on the fringe of the port along the Cam river.

Thus the city of Haiphong came into being about a century ago.

3.2. Tradition of struggle

Right from the 1st century of our era the local people had to fight against invaders. According to historial documents, Le Chan, a woman General of the Trung sisters was entrusted with the defence of this area where she set up many villages. A temple dedicated to her was built in present-day Ngo Nghe in the centre of the area, where her own residence was said to be located.

In the history of the struggle against foreign aggressors, Haiphong was a strategically important gateway. In almost all their major invasion of our country the Chinese feudalists always had a spearhead thrust through this area. These spearheads were all shattered in naval battles, especially a famous one on the Bach Dang river.

As early as 1883, the local people put up resolute resistance against the French colonialists. Insurgents led by Doc Tit who set up bases in the mountains along the Bach Dang river on many occasion intercepted French shipping on the Cam river (1883—1889).

The working class was born at quite an early date in Haiphong. Through the port it received revolutionary journals and books from abroad.

From 1885 to 1955, there were altogether 31 major strikes by stevedores — four in 1930 alone.

The French colonialists staged a comeback to North Vietnam at the end of 1946 through Haiphong. Nine years later when they were defeated they also withdrew through Haiphong after a period of 300 days for their troops in North Vietnam to be regrouped there.

On 13 May 1955, at 15:00 hours, the last French unit left Haiphong port. Since then, that date became the Tradition Day of Haiphong — the day when the city was completely liberated from the colonial yoke.

Seven days after the liberation of the city, for the first time Vietnamese pilots steered two ships of 7,000 and 10,000 tons respectively into the port.

Due to its exploits during the war of resistance against the French colonialists, President Ho Chi Minh bestowed on the city these words of praise: "Loyalty and Courage". During the war of destruction of the US imperialists against the North, both the port and the city were savagely bombarded. The US imperialists wanted to turn Haiphong into an "isolated island" and to cut off assistance to Vietnam from the socialist countries.

In the fight against the US war of destruction, Haiphong shot down 307 US aircraft and foiled the US naval blockade.

4. A city with an allround economic structure

4.1. Industry

Being a big port located a short distance from a coal mining area, Haiphong has become an important industrial city with many enterprises. The biggest is the cement factory. Haiphong cement, bearing the Dragon brand has won customers' confidence both at home and abroad.

Haiphong's traditional industry is ship-building and ship-repairing with such plants as the Bach Dang shipyard, and the Duyen Hai and Ha Long engineering plants. The shipyard can repair ships of several thousand tons, build and equip all types of barges, dredgers and coasters.

Haiphong produces many kinds of consumer goods, such as glassware, enamelware, plastic goods, mechanical tools, locks, woollen yarn, canvas shoes, woollen carpets, etc.

In 1979, the value of its industrial output accounted for 77.3% of the total value of its industrial and agricultural output. Its mechanical engineering output represented 21% of the total in northern Vietnam.

Haiphong has about 75,000 workers (not including those working in centrally-run enterprises), one-third of them skilled workers, and more than 6,000 scientific and technical cadres with university and postgraduate degrees.

For the training of workers and technical cadres, and for the promotion of scientific research in this workers' city many higher-education establishments have been founded, among them the Navigation College, a branch of the Sea-products Institute, a college dispensing correspondence courses in agriculture, engineering, economics and planning...

4.2. Enlarging the port

To serve its export and import operations, Haiphong has completed a programme for rebuilding and enlarging the port, 75 projects in all, among them 11 new wharves with a total length of 1,722 metres, many new warehouses, railways and mobile cranes.

4. 3. Agriculture

Haiphong has 57,731 ha of cropland. All the six mainland districts fulfilled their plans of building water conservancy works in the period from 1974 to 1976. The irrigation network with 118 pumping stations can water all crop areas.

The value of agricultural output in 1975 was four times the 1955 figure. In 1976, the rice yield was 5 tons per hectare per year on an average (two crops). Three co-operatives have recorded yields of 8 tons per hectare. In 1981, the rice yield was 5.15 tons per hectare per crop on an average. Five of the six districts obtained yields of more than 5 tons per hectare.

The reclamation of new land along the coast has been stepped up in Gia Minh, Trang Cat, Vinh Quang, and in areas along Highway 14.

4.4. Aquatic products

With 94 kilometres of coastline, Haiphong can catch more than 20,000 tons of sea fish each year. Fishing has been gradually mechanized. Apart from the Ha Long Fishing Enterprise, there are tens of fishing co-operatives in Cat Hai and Do Son.

In the coming years, fishing in Haiphong will be given a strong boost. Besides the promotion of sea fishing, the raising of fish in brackish water will be developed on thousands of hectares of fish farms and on 750 km along the rivers. ●

Marking the 30th Anniversary of the Liberation of Hai Phong

THE PORT TWICE REBORN

VU CAN

Like many other Vietnamese cities in the later years of this century, Hai Phong gives the impression of an undersized, threadbare, garment bursting at the seams. This port, which is also an industrial centre, was originally conceived for a population of 70,000 in the colonial period. At present, less than a half century later, it is the home of 1,300,000 people living in three inner and seven outer districts, i.e. one and a half times the population of Marseille, suburbs included. At rush hours traffic in its streets will sorely try the temper of any driver, when a solid stream of bicycles occupies the roadway and obstructs the intersections. The cityfolk, still ill-fed and ill-clad, are cramped in uncomfortable houses. The swarm of small traders living from more or less illicit gains continues to multiply. At a first glance, the picture is a rather gloomy one. But let us go back to the beginnings of this city, follow its progress over the past three decades, and gain an idea of the reasons why it has been so much talked about for its socio-economic achievements.

The Spells Cast by Wicked Fairies.

On the eve of the 30th anniversary of the liberation of the city, preparations are in full swing. A 110-kilovolt substation is being completed; so is the tourist complex in the centre of the city. The highway crossing the southern suburbs is being widened. Soldiers and young volunteers are putting back in good repair, for use by civil aviation, the former French military airfield of Cat Bi overgrown with grass. Also as part of the preparations, the city museum is closed for repair.

We had a talk with Dao Trong Hien, one of the men in charge of the mass media, who told us about the main episodes of the contemporary history of Hai Phong.

"The last soldier of the French expeditionary corps," he said, "left Hai Phong on 13 May 1955. The city was then part of the so-called "300-day area", where French forces in North Vietnam had been regrouped under the terms of the 1954 Geneva Agreements. The takeover by the People's Army put an end to ten years of occupation. As they withdrew, the enemy predicted for the city an imminent total collapse..."

That was a spell rather than a prophecy. Yet it was within a hair's breadth of being realized. Indeed, in a spirit of revenge, the defeated enemy left behind them only an empty shell, a port stripped of its installations and personnel, factories with smokeless chimneys, and partly deserted streets, a number of Hai Phong inhabitants having been coerced to go south. At the time, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam could communicate with the rest of the world only through Hai Phong port. It was the only lung of its war-wrecked economy.

"It was the enemy," continued Hien, "who were in for a surprise. Barely a week after the French departure, the first foreign ships cast anchor in the port of liberated Hai Phong, into which they were led by pilots serving the new regime. It was not an easy affair for never before had Vietnamese learnt to run a sea port."

Hai Phong was revived and put on a new face in the period between the two wars of resistance, from late 1955 to late 1964, thanks to the massive aid of socialist countries. Its paralysed industrial enterprises were successively put back into operation and more and more new factories were added. The socialist transformation of private industry and trade was completed in the urban districts and agricultural cooperation in the suburban rural communes. When Washington started its aero-naval war of destruction against the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, a good starting base had been created by the city for its development.

"Many people in the world must still remember that wish expressed by an American hawk to 'bomb North Vietnam back to the Stone Age'. From early 1965 to late 1972, in two campaigns seperated by an interlude, the enemy launched against Hai Phong 1,345 air raids, not counting naval bombardments, hurling on the city 50,000 tons of bombs, mines, torpedoes, and rockets. Their aim was to destroy or at least cut from its hinterland the only port through which the Vietnamese people were receiving international assistance. In the sky over Hai Phong they lost 317 aircraft, including B.52 super-bombers, without attaining that objective. However, by the end of the war they had destroyed 40% of the residential quarters and 70% of the public-interest works."

Had the city failed to evacuate its industrial bases to the countryside, it would have had to re-start from scratch. Hardly was it back on its feet, however, when Beijing threw down the mask.

"New prophecy about an imminent collapse of Vietnam," said Dao Trong Hien, "this time made by an erstwhile ally. At any rate, China dealt us a hard blow when in 1978 it cut off all aid to our country, recalled its experts and instigated an exodus by ethnic Chinese. The impact was felt by

the city: several factories had been built with Chinese assistance and a sizable number of ethnic Chinese were living in the city. In 1979, the Chinese aggression took place: the city sent to the front a part of its armed forces whose expenses were borne by its budget. And at present, the war of sabotage... Of course none of the spells cast by our enemies was realized. But one can none the less have an idea of the difficulties created for us over the past three decades."

Toward a Takeoff

The Vice-President of the City's People's Committee, Nguyen Dinh Nhien, earned some reputation five years ago, when he worked out a new system of contractual quotas in agriculture, applied in the suburban district of Do Son where he was secretary of the Party Committee. Under the system the member of the local farming cooperative was allotted a plot of ricefield and would pay a predetermined rent to the co-op, and any surplus in the output would go to him. Farm work was divided into eight links, of which five were to be undertaken by the cooperative, which alone was qualified to do it properly: mechanized soil preparation; multiplication, selection and supply of seeds; water conservation and control; input of fertilizer and lime; and plant protection. The three other links could be done by individual farmers: planting of rice seedlings; care for the crop; and harvesting. The farmers were to use their family's manpower and resources with a view to achieving a bumper harvest. This new scheme stimulated individual initiative and efforts while strengthening the leading and stabilizing role of the cooperative. It has been quickly popularized throughout the country and is credited with having taken agricultural cooperation out of a bottleneck.

"This system of agricultural contracts," said the Vice-President, "which we may ascribe to Hai Phong, is only an application in rural conditions of one that has been practised in industry for many years. We have extended it to pig raising, sea fishing and other economic activities. The success it achieved in 1980 created a real turning-point in our agricultural economy and had an impact on our economy as a whole."

In his younger days Nguyen Dinh Nhien was a mechanic before engaging in Party work. After finishing his higher political and economic studies, he was sent to the Soviet Union for a short period of practical work in management. At present, as a standing member of the City Party Committee, he is in charge of economic affairs.

"The land here suffers from salinity and used to give poor yields. In 1955, the average per hectare yield was only 18.7 metric quintals of paddy, and total paddy output was only 80,000 tonnes. The building of a water conservation system and the application of new farming methods, made possible by agricultural cooperation, raised them to 43 quintals and 200,000 tonnes, respectively, in 1975, i.e. twenty years later. In the late 1970's, economic management based on voluntarism, far from being as effective as it had been in the days of the anti-American resistance, drove some of our farming cooperatives to the brink of dissolution. But a timely stabilization was brought about by the new system of contractual quotas. At present, the average paddy yield is around 60 quintals per hectare and total output nearly 300,000 tonnes, i.e. more than 200 kilos per head of city population, including workers, public employees and members of the armed forces. We no longer need assistance from the central administration to make good our food deficit. With the creation in our suburban districts of insurance institutions for crops and animals, our rural economy is advancing with firm strides, both the collective (cooperative) and family sectors of it. For three years now, a mass movement has developed under the leadership of the Party and the administration to build brick-and-tile houses in replacement of the thatched huts inherited from the past. Now that basic general education and elementary health care are within the reach of all, one may say with one of our publicists that our countryside is heading for a takeoff."

Nguyen Dinh Nhien now talked to us about industry and handicrafts, both of which have made great progress.

"Some observers," he said in tongue-in-cheek fashion, "said that Hai Phong was dead at the time of its liberation. Let's not exaggerate: it was only dying. In fact, of its eight industrial enterprises, two were still operating, though with a bad limp: the power plant and the water-works. They employed 200 out of the 4,000-strong population of workers and employees. At present, we have 109 enterprises of heavy and light industry with 220,000 workers and employees. Our shipyards, besides barges, motor-boats and launches, are building their first 400-ton coasters and, before long, 1,000-ton ones. Our engineering plants are turning out machine-tools and can produce complete chains for the processing of tea, coffee, tobacco, and rubber. We are making bicycles, electric fans and many consumer goods, both for home consumption and for export. Handicrafts, reorganized, are practised by 250 cooperatives and production collectives with a total membership of 60,000. Within the space of thirty years, the yearly consumption of electricity has risen from ten to 180 million kilowatt-hours. Our production units, not to mention our service industries, are being freed from the subsidy-based methods of bureaucratic management, which were bound up with a period when our war economy depended for a not negligible part on foreign aid and when a rather bureaucratic centralism raised an airtight partition between production and marketing. Far from showing losses as in the past, they now make profits and meet the requirements of the market ever better, for according to the new

regulations the producer must also be concerned with marketing."

In Hai Phong foreign trade plays the role of a catalyst in economic development and the Vice-President explained to us its mechanism.

"The starting point remains State monopoly in both foreign trade and the control of foreign exchange. However, activities in these fields had better be decentralized on condition that they follow a unified national plan and submit to strict control by the central administration through the agency of the Foreign Trade Ministry and the State Bank. For years, in accordance with State laws, we have carried out export and import operations on the basis of our possibilities and needs, making the most of our strong points and quickly correcting our shortcomings. All enterprises producing goods for export may use part of their foreign-exchange earnings to import machines, spares, raw materials... so as to expand their production. We are now exporting vegetables, flowers, pork, shrimps and other sea foods, handicraft and art articles, manufactured goods, footwear, carpets, bicycles, etc., while importing only capital goods. With our foreign-exchange earnings we invest in industry, handicrafts, agriculture, aquiculture, sea fishing, transport and even capital construction, so as to strengthen our economic infrastructure. Such is the secret of our quick progress."

Our interlocutor having mentioned a takeoff for the surrounding countryside, we felt tempted to ask him about an eventual takeoff for the whole city. Here is his answer: "We are thinking of it, and we are preparing for it. We have worked out a development plan for up to the year 2005 when we shall mark the 50th anniversary of the liberation of the city."

Hovels and Flowers

An Bien, one of the 33 wards of Hai Phong, is part of Le Chan district, named after a woman commander of insurgent forces in the coastal region in the days of the insurrection staged by the Trung sisters against Chinese rule in the first century of the Christian era. There live 2,000 households with 10,000 members on an area of 1.2 square kilometres. A narrow lane crosses it, lined by old low-roofed dwellings. From the lane, eighteen alleys branch out, fishbone fashion, and subdivide into a multitude of ramifications. No verdure, no open space.

"The folk who lived here," said Nguyen Van Tha, president of the ward people's committee," used to comprise workers, labourers, rickshaw pullers, pedlars, people without regular employment and living from more or less illicit activities. This "population of lanes and alleys" as they were then called was steeped in misery, disease, ignorance, vice, even crime. Those were colonial times, and no changes were brought about by French reoccupation of the city except for the fact that rickshaw pullers were replaced by pedicab drivers. As for the lane that forms the axis of the ward, it was lined with shops run by ethnic Chinese who shamelessly exploited their poor customers through sales on credit and usurious loans."

Those people "of lanes and alleys" call to mind Jack London's "People of the Abyss" of the last century. With this difference that the fate reserved for them by colonialism and feudalism was even worse. This is carefully hushed up by imperialist propaganda, which strives to disparage peoples fighting for their independence, especially when they opt for socialism.

"In the period between the two wars of resistance," said Nguyen Van Tha, "a lot was done to make the environment more wholesome. More decent habitations replaced the hovels. The reduction of unemployment, the eradication of illiteracy, the popularization of hygiene, the liquidation of social evils, prostitution, gambling and opium-addiction in particular... had beneficent effects."

An Bien had put on a new face when the first American bombs were dropped on the city. Eventually the B.52s came. With the return of peace, a new battle began, that of reconstruction.

"The already enormous difficulties worsened day by day and reached a climax in 1978-79 as a result of Beijing's betrayal. The latter's **Nanqiao** (Victimized Chinese Residents) operation in particular caused the exodus of 4,200 ethnic Chinese, one-third of the population of the ward. One of those émigrés later returned on the sly and his arrest led to the discovery of a group of saboteurs. This new foe often put us in difficult straits but the situation was finally stabilized and An Bien has been commended on several occasions for good maintenance of public order and security."

The city administration gives top priority to the strengthening of power at the grassroots. The Secretary of the City Party Committee, Doan Duy Thanh, has earned a reputation for dynamism and savvy. He makes regular inspection tours in the 33 wards. The watchword is a modest one: "Let the cityfolk have enough food to eat, sleep undisturbed at night, and feel safe in the streets."

"In execution of the new government decisions," said the president of An Bien, "our people's committee is to concern itself not only with administrative, but also economic affairs. We have just taken over a dozen handicraft cooperatives which were under the authority of the district. To help our people make both ends meet, we have encouraged them to engage in handicrafts for export and, even though ours is an urban ward, to grow vegetables wherever this can be done and to raise pigs and poultry to improve their diet. Our alleys have been paved and people no longer flounder in the mud when it rains. They can ride

their bicycles or mopeds up to their front doors, and their houses, though still quite modest, conform more and more to the standards of habitability."

* * *

While on the whole the collective peasantry live better than the workers and other wage-earners, the farmers of Dang Hai stand out particularly in this respect, in the general context of living conditions in the Red River delta in the 1980's. This locality, situated 8 kilometres from the centre of the city, in An Hai distrist, tops the list of the 162 communes on the purlieus of Hai Phong. The roomy brick-and-tile houses, many with a concrete terrace roof and painted in bright colours, stand amidst gardens which are not very large but all boast flower-beds and dwarf palms. Opposite a hoary pagoda, moss-covered and well-preserved, stands the communal house of culture, a modern two-storeyed building housing an 800-seat auditorium, a club, a library and reading-room, conference rooms and reception rooms, with a total floor space of 2,000 square metres.

We were received by Tran Thanh Chau, president of the farming co-op.

"Our commune is rather small in size," he said. "Out of a population of 4,200 distributed in nearly 900 households, 2,000 are of working age, from 16 to 55 for men, to 50 for women. The per head area of cultivable land is negligible: 218 square metres. Monoculture of rice kept us in poverty in the old days, the more so since yields were poor, 15-16 metric quintals per hectare, and only one crop of rice was grown each year. In 1961, we made a shift, combining rice cultivation with the growing of flowers, fruit and vegetables and animal husbandry. We have kept to this formula. It has taken us out of poverty and chronic food shortage. Before we had enough food for only two months each year: the rest of the time our men hired themselves out as bricklayers and our women peddled goods. At present, all are working the fields. We walk on both legs, as the simile runs, paying attention to both the collective and the family sectors of the economy, which represent 52% and 48% respectively of total output value."

The people of Dang Hai, as can be expected, are real experts in intensive farming. They pay particular attention to crop rotation and consequently to soil improvement. Their business acumen has led them to produce the best-prized goods on the market. For instance, their dwarf palms produce areca nuts that sell like hot cakes to future bridegrooms who need them as traditional gifts to the families of their fiancées at the time of betrothal. They also draw good profits from their white roses which are sold not by the flower but by the petal, to traditional-medicine practitioners who make medicaments out of them.

"On our collectively-tilled plots," said the president, "the rate of rotation is 2; on our family gardens it is 6 or 7. We also plant crops in intercalation so that on the same family plot we can get in successive seasons cucumbers and other vegetables as well as flowers and fruit, jujube in particular. Since 1970, we have been exporting vegetables and fruit to the Soviet Union and pork to Hongkong. Our foreign-exchange earnings deposited at the bank, though still quite small, have allowed us to import chemical fertilizers. Of course transactions go through the City Department of Foreign Trade. Our living conditions have improved year by year. Food is served free to the 300 children kept in our kindergartens, and school equipment to the 1,400 pupils of our basic general-education school. Now that the exploiter classes have been eliminated since long, we no longer have paupers among us. At present, our peasants are classed, according to their property which consists essentially of consumer goods and individual means of production, into middle, well-to-do and rich peasants."

As we walked past the house of the co-op president in the course of a leisurely stroll in the village — a handsome cottage with ochre walls and green windows — we asked him about his personal situation.

"Our family has seven members," he said, "my wife, myself and our five children. We work two sao (720 sq.m.) of ricefield for the co-op under contract and a family garden of the same area. Our annual revenue is over a half million dong. We own a moped, three bicycles and a radio set. Unlike some of our wealthier fellow-villagers, we have no refrigerator, nor a hardwood cabinet inlaid with mother-of-pearl. We are middle peasants. Most of my time is devoted not to family economic activities but to the management of the cooperative."

* * *

The first campaign for building up coastal land has ended. It was conducted by young volunteers and members of the armed forces. It helped reduce unemployment and gained for Hai Phong 10,800 hectares of new land, i.e. one-fifteenth of its present area. Work has begun there on aquiculture for export and delimiting new ricefields wherever possible. Dinh Vu island at the mouth of the Cam river has become a peninsula after being linked to the mainland by a dyke. A new port with modern equipment will operate there, closer to the sea than the old port. Less than three kilometres from Dinh Vu is Cat Hai peninsula, which will become an island after the completion of the Cai Trap canal, called by some the "Suez of Hai Phong", proportionately speaking, of course. An hour's sailing from Cat Hai will take the visitor to Cat Ba island, covered with primeval forest where live an abundant tropical flora and fauna. Cat Ba, at present a national park, will be developed into a great tourist centre.

But this is the affair of the 1990's. ●

FAMILY PLANNING IN VIETNAM AND ITS PROSPECTS

ANH THU

As in most developing countries the large and fast-growing population in Vietnam has exerted great pressure on socio-economic development programmes. But unlike the case in many countries, the overriding concern here is not only to redistribute the population, organize effective migration, adjust the pace of urbanization and protect natural resources and the evironment, but first and foremost to reduce the population growth rate.

The population growth rate in Vietnam has been very high over the past forty years. Since 1939, it has averaged about 3 per cent annually. In 1955 — 1960, following the conclusion of the anti-French war of resistance, it jumped to 3.8 per cent. In the period from 1955 to 1977 the population of Vietnam grew from 25 to 50 million in spite of the anti-US war of resistance. Following are some results of a census conducted in 1975: In Ward 16, District 4 of Ho Chi Minh City, of the 1,253 women of child-bearing age two-thirds had from 6 to 10 children. In Hai Binh commune, Tinh Gia district, Thanh Hoa province, a commune of average size, 70% of the families had 7 and more children. In 1975, Binh Tri Thien province had 1.7 million inhabitants. From 1975 to 1980 more than 100,000 of its inhabitants went to other provinces under the programme of redistribution of the work-force. Yet, due to the high birth rate (3%) the population figure in 1980 was again 1.7 million.

By 1984, the population of Vietnam had grown to 58 million. Over the past forty years, the increase in food production has barely kept pace with population growth. The result has been a stationary level of per capita food production, a high population density, and the shrinking of farmland. At present, Vietnam is the 13th most populous country in the world and is also among those with the lowest national income per head of population.

As early as 1962, the Vietnamese Government decided to enforce a programme of family planning. The programme was entrusted to the Health Ministry, assisted by the State Planning Commission, the Federation of Trade Unions, the Women's Union, the Fatherland Front... Policies aimed at encouraging birth control have been issued. Thanks to this, the population growth rate dropped to 2.4% in 1980 from 3.3% in 1970 and 3.8% in 1960.

However, this still falls far short of the demands of economic development. In August 1981, the Council of Ministers issued a new instruction regarding family planning, calling on each couple to have two children at most, with a view to bringing the rate of population growth down to 1.7% by the end of 1985. Birth-control targets are to be attained at all Government offices and production establisments. Each locality is to set a target for itself on the basis of the national target and its own concrete conditions. As a result, by 1984 the population growth rate had dropped to 2.2% throughout the country. Most encouragingly, some rural localities with a long record of fast population growth have obtained good results in birth control.

Lac Hong commune in My Van district, Hai Hung province, is a case in point. In this agricultural commune with a population of 4,211, each couple has only two or three children compared with the national average of five. The birth-control programme has received warm response from the population. Few women marry before the age of 22 and most stop bearing children at the age of 30. Most couples are applying contraceptive measures. Users of contraceptive devices, apart from free medical care, also receive bonuses in paddy and other foods. These measures have concurred to bring the annual population growth rate at Lac Hong down to 1.6%.

Regrettably, however, there are not yet many places like Lac Hong. Nationwide, propaganda for family planning remains inadequate. A large section of the population still has mixed feelings about birth control, and doesn't know how to go about it. A survey shows that only about 30% of all married couples of child-bearing age are using contraceptives. The national population which stood at 30 million in 1960 will have risen to 60 million by mid-1985. On an average, a Viet-

namese woman of child-bearing age still has four or more children, compared with six in 1960. In other words, more than 20 years after the birth-control programme was started, the number of children per family has been reduced by only two while the total population has almost doubled. Although the birth rate in Vietnam is lower than the average in the Third World (2.3% compared with 3.1%), the mortality rate has been lowered thanks to progress in medical care and improvement in the social environment (0.7% compared with 1.1%) with the result that its population growth rate is higher than the Third-World average (2.2% compared to 2 — 2.1%). The present annual increase in the population is 1,300,000, which means a drop in per capita food production if 400,000 tonnes more of food is not produced each year.

Lowering the population growth rate is a prime concern of the Vietnamese Government. So far, this work has been entrusted to the health service. The latter, if left to itself, cannot cope with such a vast problem which involves many aspects of social life. Besides, investments have remained inadequate.

In April 1984, the Council of Ministers set up a National Population and Family Planning Commission, directly under its authority, which is to give a real thrust to the campaign. The Commission has ramifications in all provinces, cities and special sectors.

In recent years, a body of specialists in demography has gradually taken shape in Vietnam. Their reports and forecasts have attracted wide attention and received general approval. Scientists say that if the birth-control campaign should progress at the present rate there would be no hope of reducing the number of children per family to two by the end of this century and the population would have exceeded the 80 million mark by that date. They also point to the need of bringing the number of married couples using contraceptives from the present 30% to 70% within the next ten years. The birth rate should be so reduced that the population would stabilize at 75 — 80 million about the year 2000.

A more vigorous propaganda campaign should be launched so that family planning be accepted by the entire population. Since all young men have to do military service, family planning should also be a topic for education in the army. Demographic education at school, which began a few years ago, must be improved so that all young people will realize the vital importance of birth control before they get married. More importantly still, Government policies should provide for more effective incentives in this regard.

* * *

Viewed against the results reaped so far and the target set for the year 2000, the battle to be fought in the last 15 years of this century will not be an easy one. However, the crucial guarantee for its success lies in the fact that the Party and the Government have fully grasped the importance of the problem. Shortcomings in the conduct of the campaign are being overcome. The experience gained in countries with comparable conditions is being seriously studied. We have good reason to hope that the target set by Vietnam for the year 2000 in this regard will be reached. ●

PROFESSIONAL ART ACTIVITIES IN 1985

In implementation of the decision taken by the Party Political Bureau on the organization of the major anniversaries of 1985, the Ministry of Culture and the central art associations have made preparations for the following events:

— A national dramatic festival for professional troupes;

— A national festival of song, dance and music for professional emsembles;

— A national film festival;

— A film month for Vietnamese films which have been awarded national and international prizes;

— A month of selected art performances by professional theatrical, song, dance and musical companies;

— Organization of Vietnamese Culture Days in a number of fraternal countries.

— Implementation of a programme of art exchanges with foreign countries.

POPULATION EDUCATION FOR ADULTS

VU NGOC BINH

Social evolution and scientific progress have brought about rapid and far-reaching changes in the world. Many scientific branches have comme into existence in order to solve urgent problems affecting mankind, one of which being population education which lies at the interface of the sciences of education and demography. Its final aim is to raise the quality of life while its immediate aim is to stress the importance of the demographic question so that people may have correct thoughts and attitudes with regard to State policies on this question.

Born one decade ago and chiefly carried out in Asia, Africa and Latin America where poverty and ignorance prevail, population education needs to be perfected with the help of practical experience. Uncontrolled growth of population is one of the causes of poverty and hunger. Population education being a pressing problem for all it can meet with success only with the support and approval of the whole of society.

This young science with an interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary character is fundamentally based on the science of demography. It is not sex education, nor family planning nor birth control, though they are included in population education. Its targets are determined by State policies on demography which in our country are first of all aimed at reducing the population growth rate and rationally redistributing the population. Together with many other countries in Asia and the Pacific, Vietnam is actively taking part in the UN population education programme and is conducting experiments with the technical assistance of UNESCO's Regional Office for Education in Asia and the Pacific (ROEAP) and the financial aid of UNFPA (United Nations Fund for Population Activities). Thanks to this we have already started a national 4-year population education (1984 — 1987) programme.

First, this programme is devoted to experimentation in Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City and in Thai Binh, Quang Nam — Da Nang and Long An provinces. Later on, on the strength of the experience gained, the programme will be carried out countrywide. It is a major task of all branches of activity and social organizations to do away with the "population explosion". The educational branch, in particular, will assume the task of working out the contents of population education and family planning and introduce them to the educational system.

Population education will be dispensed in four main branches of education: complementary (adult) education, general education, pedagogy and infant education. At the international seminar on population education held in 1982, particular attention was paid to its introduction into complementary (adult) education. As a part of the national education system, adult education includes a comprehensive network of educational establishments, extending from anti-illiteracy classes to the final classes of general education, and works hand in hand with cultural, information, and scientific popularization organizations. Its task is to improve the cultural level of the toiling people, help them raise their professional and technical standards and causes them to become true collective masters of society.

The main beneficiairies of complementary education are young cadres and workers — people who are physically and mentually mature. Most of them have or are about to have a family and are members of the work-force of society. All their activities directly affect the development of the country and they play an important role in the implementation of the Party line and policies, particularly regarding demographic questions. The point here is that most of those attending complementary classes do not yet possess the necessary knowledge of those questions and

still fail to grasp the significance of Party policies on demography. Hence their views of these matters are not always correct and at times even downright backward concerning such questions as family size, the desirability of children, standard of living, etc.

The introduction of population education into the curriculum of complementary education will effectively contribute to highlighting the Party's principle on education: To combine study with work, theory with practice, the school with society, and education with productive labour. Population education will be a "novelty" in the present programme of complementary education and this new science will contribute to boosting the three revolutions now going in Vietnam.

The experience gained in many countries where population education is being dispensed has shown that it is possible to boldly drop obsolete notions from the present educational programme and replace them by new ones taken from population education. On the other hand one should also avoid unnecessary constraints getting in the way of the performance of the current programme. The contents of population education should be improved and enriched to become a useful component of this programme (particularly in relation to such disciplines as biology, geography, literature, mathematics).

While in the past, the post-primary education specific topic courses for farmers or the secondary education courses for the village cadres in the Mekong river delta already contained elements of demography and population education such as birth control, family planning, fundamentals of hygiene, child rearing as well as general knowledge today, these elements will be selected and readapter to conform to the requirements of people of different walks of life, social conditions, and age groups and to the characteristics of each region.

It is necessary to have appropriate programmes and teaching materials for populated areas like urban and industrial centres, and for the armed forces. Population education should include:

1. Fundamentals of demography (population, rate of natural growth, birth rate, death rate, demographic structure, population pyramid, population density...);

2. Population growth, causes and effects;

3. Demographic situation in Vietnam and in the world;

4. Relations between demographic and other problems;

5. Sex education and family planning;

6. Main problems of the demographic policies of the Party and the State.

The inclusion of population education in the teaching programme is to be carried out in three ways:

1. Special lessons or programmes to be made into components of the present teaching programme;

2. Propaganda materials popularizing scientific knowledge;

3. Inclusion in such disciplines as biology, geography, literature, mathematics.

The teacher must be constantly aware of the necessity of dispensing population education. For this purpose it is necessary to prepare programmes and materials to suit various categories of people and various regions. This education should be assisted by the mass media: newspapers, radio, T.V., films, posters, etc.

Population education in adult classes requires close cooperation with other branches of education; cooperation between the Ministry of Education and other departments and social organizations, and between the central administration and local administrations.

They must work together in the preparations of materials, the use of audio-visual aids, and the training of teachers. It is also necessary to make the best use of international assistance and cooperation and to learn from the experiences of other countries.

In the immediate future, we shall still meet with great difficulties in the organization of population education as this branch is completely new to our people, but we also have basic advantages: our Party and State have issued concrete policies in this respect; the educational service is resolved to implement them; our people as a whole have given them a warm welcome; the educational reform is underway; furthermore we are receiving precious international cooperation and assistance and benefiting from the rich experience gathered by other countries. The introduction of population education into adult education in particular and in the national education system in general will certainly contribute to solving urgent population problems, serving the educational reform and the three revolutions, and working for the welfare of our people and the prosperity of our country. ●

THE LESSON...

(Continued from page 2)

leave them to reap the greatest benefits. In the last months of the war they started a race to share out the world and the booty when the war ended...

Many useful lessons can be drawn from the victory over Hitlerite fascism and Japanese militarism. However, it is obvious that imperialism refuses to learn the lessons of the past. Pinning their hopes on their economic, military and techno-scientific potentialities, the imperialists are frenziedly stepping up the arms race in an attempt to win back military superiority. At present, the warlike expansionist and hegemonist forces, headed by US imperialism, are frantically launching a crusade against the Soviet Union, the socialist community, the communist movement, the national independence movement, the non-aligned countries and peace-and freedom-loving countries, thus causing great tension in the world. In order to carry out these dark schemes they are seeking every means to divide our ranks on all sides and in all fields. They would try to win over one country, while seeking to isolate and oppose another. They are stepping up their activities against the Soviet Union, the three Indochinese countries, Cuba, Nicaragua, and the seething revolutionary movements on all continents. They have ceaselessly disseminated demagogic and deceitful allegations to the effect that both the US and the Soviet Union, both NATO and the Warsaw Treaty countries should be held equally responsible for the present world tension, that as super-powers both the Soviet Union and the US are after world hegemony. This allegation is very reactionary and dangerous, seeking as it does to divide the socialist community, isolate the Soviet Union, weaken the coordinated counter-measures undertaken by the fraternal countries against the war preparations by the US and NATO countries, especially the deployment of US missiles in Western Europe and the stepping up of the arms race, even in outer space, and to disorient the anti-war movement in West European countries and elsewhere. It is to be noted that the Chinese propaganda machine and diplomatic services are echoing this allegation.

All this has rendered the world situation tense and complicated and has seriously threatened the peace and security of all nations. More than ever before, the struggle to preserve peace is becoming the pressing foremost task of the people of all countries and people of conscience in the world. The struggle for peace and the defence of peace is not only a democratic movement but also a revolutionary task of great strategic importance. That strategic task is bound up with the revolutionary cause of all peoples in our time.

The struggle for the defence of peace is closely linked to the development of revolutionary currents. The forces of peace and democracy must muster all forces and make use of all forms of struggle in order to prevent the danger of a new world war and to foil every scheme and act of war of imperialism and world reaction.

The socialist community and the Soviet Union are the mainstay, the bulwark of peace. To strengthen the socialist countries in every respect and the one-mindedness and solidarity of the socialist community and the world communist movement is a factor of decisive importance in the defence of world peace.

The struggle for the defence of world peace also requires the building and constant development of a broad and powerful front embracing all socialist countries, all world communist and workers' parties, all countries in the non-aligned movement, all the forces of peace, national independence, democracy and progress on the five continents. The coordination of the common efforts of all members of this front and the use of judicious tactics can create real possibilities for defeating the warlike, aggressive policy of the imperialists and reactionaries, effectively check the arms race and the danger of a new world war and prevent a nuclear war.

As everyone knows, at present Soviet-US talks are being held in Geneva on disarmament, nuclear arms control, against the militarization of outer space. On this occasion, at the extraordinary plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union held on 11 March 1985, the CPSU General Secretary M.S. Gorbachov stressed the following on the Soviet relationship with capitalist countries: "We will resolutely follow the Leninist peace line. We will always respond to goodwill by goodwill, to trust by trust. But it should be known that we will never allow the interests of our homeland and those of our allies to be violated.

"We set great store by the results achieved in the easing of tension in the 70's and are ready to continue to take part in the process of establishing mutually beneficial peaceful cooperation between different countries on the basis of equality, mutual respect and non-interference in each other's internal affairs. By taking new steps in this direction, we can commemorate in a worthy way the 40th anniversary of the great victory over Hitlerite fascism and Japanese militarism."

He also stressed: "In the present complicated international situation, more than ever before, the important point is to maintain the defence capabilities of our socialist homeland at such a level as to drive home to all potential invaders the fact that any attempt to violate the security of the Soviet land and its allies will meet with telling counter-blows. Our glorious armed forces will have everything necessary to this end".

We warmly welcome and support this goodwill and firm stand of the Soviet Union.

In our political and ideological work, we must widely publicize the peace initiatives, the goodwill and firm stand of the Soviet Union and of the other fraternal socialist countries. We must strongly assert

the role of the Soviet Union as the mainstay of the revolutionary and peace forces, forestalling the danger of a nuclear holocaust. On the other hand we must denounce the warlike policy aimed at carrying out the old scheme of fascism by conducting a crusade against all revolutionary forces of our time. We must strongly denounce the collusion between Beijing and the imperialist countries aimed at kindling conflicts in many areas of the world, maintaining and increasing world tension, and distorting the peace policy pursued by the Soviet Union and the other fraternal socialist countries. We must also watchfully keep our eyes on the many-sided cooperation between the US and China and the shaping up of the strategic alliance called by some US military circles "the Washington-Tokyo-Beijing Iron Triangle" and the Eastern NATO.

In the anti-fascist struggle our people adhered at an early date to the world democratic front against fascism. Thanks to our Party's correct and creative line, a broad democratic movement and a revolutionary upsurge led our people to coordinate their action with the world democratic forces in the struggle against fascism. We linked the internationalist duty of struggling against fascism with the interests of our working class and people in their fight against the colonial reactionaries and their henchmen, for democratic freedoms, better living standards, and peace.

In the light of the resolution of the 7th Congress of the Communist International, our Party skilfully used various forms of organization and methods of struggle which accorded with the concrete conditions in Vietnam.

When the Second World War broke out, our Party made a correct analysis of the situation, pointed to the enemy, set the immediate tasks, effected a shift in strategic guidance, and gave the task of struggling for national independence paramount importance in the Vietnamese revolution. Our Party organized the Viet Minh Front, built up base areas, stepped up political struggle, and developed our armed forces.

Our Party, led by President Ho Chi Minh, closely followed every stage of the struggle of the Soviet people and the peoples of other countries. It was confident, right from the outset, of the ultimate victory of this great holy war and made the necessary preparations to seize the opportune moment.

We Vietnamese people closely link our own struggle for liberation with the victory of the October Revolution and with the struggle against Hitlerite fascism in Europe and against Japanese militarism in Asia. This causes us to realize even more deeply the historic significance of the victory of the Soviet Union and other forces against fascism.

The glorious victory of the Soviet people and Army and of the world's people in the Second World War has created farourable conditions for the revolutions of Asian peoples like those of Vietnam and other countries to win victory or to develop more vigorously. As the organizer and leader of the Vietnamese revolution, our Party, better than anybody else, knows the significance of this victory and its impact on the success of the August Revolution in 1945 and on the profound changes happening in our country over the past 40 years. Comrade Le Duan, our Party's General Secretary, said: "The success of our August Revolution cannot be separated from the victory of the Red Army and the Soviet people over the German and Japanese fascists" [2]. Seizing the opportunity, in Spring 1945 our Party took a timely decision and launched partial insurrections to seize power, and created the first and then sole worker-peasant State in Southeast Asia. This was one of the direct results of the victory over fascism and at the same time an important factor contributing to the consolidation of that great victory.

It is in this spirit that this year the Vietnamese people solemnly commemorate the 40th anniversary of the victory over Hitlerite fascism and Japanese militarism, as well as the 40th anniversary of the August Revolution and the birth of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. These are closely related events.

On this occasion our people will do their utmost to bring into full play the achievements recorded and carry out their two strategic tasks, namely the building of socialism and defence of the homeland. They will constantly be on their guard in face of the aggressive schemes of imperialism, Chinese expansionism and hegemonism and international reaction, strive for peace in Southeast Asia and Asia and contribute to the defence of world peace. As you know, of late the Chinese expansionists and hegemonists have overtly and arrogantly threatened to give Vietnam a "second lesson". Obviously, they have not learned the first "lesson", taught them in 1979. Our people cherish peace, but never have we been cowed by threats. We have shown great calm in dealing with all kinds of threats. All those who wanted to give us a "lesson" have received bitter lessons.

We shall turn the commemoration of this great victory into a manifestation of the strength of the solidarity binding together the peoples of the socialist countries and the whole of progressive mankind and a manifestation of our resolve to do everything possible to preserve peace and thwart all schemes of imperialism, Beijing expansionism and hegemonism and other reactionary forces.

(Opening speech at the Symposium on "The Epochal Significance of the Victory over Hitlerite Fascism and Japanese Militarism" held in Hanoi on 27 and 28 March 1985).

2. Le Duan: **The International Situation and Our Party's International Tasks**, Su That Publishing House, Hanoi, 1975, p. 173.

CHRONOLOGY • CHRONOLOGY

(16 March — 15 April)

MARCH

16. Opening in Hanoi of an exhibition of paintings by painter Nguyen Tu Nghiem. 68 lacquer and oil paintings are on display.

17. **Tokyo**: The Japan — Vietnam Friendship Association holds a grand meeting to celebrate its 30th founding anniversary (19 March 1955 — 19 March 1985).

18. A Portuguese Communist Party delegation, headed by Octavio Pato, Political Commission member and Secretary of the Party Central Committee, ends its official visit to Vietnam.

19 — 23. Mongolian Foreign Minister, Mangalyn Dugersuren, visits Vietnam.

— The Vietnam — Japan Friendship Association organizes a film show on the occasion of its 20th founding anniversary.

20. The Vietnamese Government hands over to a US Government representative the remains of five US servicemen who died in Vietnam during the Vietnam War.

20 — 21. Holding in Hanoi of a conference by the Executive Bureau of the International Trade Unions of Metal and Engineering Industry under the World Federation of Trade Unions.

21. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Vietnam demands that the Thai authorities stop condoning acts of terrorism against Vietnamese residents in Thailand.

— Signing in Hanoi of minutes on scientific cooperation for the 1986 — 1990 period between the Polish Academy of Sciences on the one hand and the Vietnam Institute of Sciences and the Vietnam Commission for Social Sciences on the other.

21 — 22. **Hanoi**: Holding of a conference on medical cooperation programmes by the Vietnamese Ministry of Health, the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

21 — 28. An SRV National Assembly delegation, led by its Chairman Nguyen Huu Tho, pays a friendship visit to Albania.

25 — 29. A Vietnamese Communist Party delegation, led by Vo Chi Cong, member of the Political Bureau of the CPVCC leaves Hanoi for Hungary to attend the 13th Congress of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party.

26. **Hanoi**: Starting of the construction of the Lenin Monument at Chi Lang park (Centre of Hanoi).

27 **March** — 1 **April**. A Vietnamese military delegation, led by General Van Tien Dung, Defence Minister, pays an official friendship visit to India.

27 — 28. **Hanoi**: A symposium on "The Epochal Significance of the Victory over Hitlerite Fascism and Japanese Militarism" is held.

27. **Havana**: Signing of an agreement for further strengthening cooperation and mutual assistance between Cuban information and publishing offices and the Vietnam News Agency.

APRIL

1 — 7. Nguyen Huu Tho, Chairman of the National Assembly of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, pays an official friendship visit to Cuba.

3 — 6. Soviet Deputy-Foreign Minister Mikhail Stephanovich Kapitsa visits Vietnam.

4. Combat Group 52, Brigades 7703, 7706, and 9906 of Vietnamese volunteer troops begin their withdrawal from Kampuchea.

— **Berlin**: The Vietnamese Embassy in Berlin receives a token part of the 4,000 books of mathematics donated by the late Doctor of Science Ludwig Bill (GDR).

4 — 6. A delegation of the Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation (ACCT), led by Prof. Doctor François Owono Nguema, ACCT General Secretary, pays a visit to Vietnam.

4 — 14. A delegation of the Polish United Workers' Party, led by Marian Wozniak, Political Bureau member, Secretary of the Party Central Committee, and First Secretary of the Warsaw Party Committee, pays an official friendship visit to Vietnam.

8 — 12. Nguyen Huu Tho, Chairman of the National Assembly of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, pays an official friendship visit to Mexico.

11. On the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the liberation of South Vietnam, the **Su That** (Truth) Publishing House put out three books containing precious documents made public for the first time: "The South, the Bronze Rampart of the Homeland" (by President Ho Chi Minh), "Party Documents on the Struggle Against American Aggression, for National Salvation", and "Letters to the South" (by Le Duan).

— Prof. Christopho Bouramene, Minister of Health and Social Affairs of the People's Republic of Congo, pays an official friendship visit to Vietnam.

— **Budapest**: Exchange of ratification instruments for the Vietnam — Hungary Friendship and Cooperation Treaty.

12. A Vietnamese military delegation, led by General Van Tien Dung, Defence Minister, pays an official friendship visit to Indonesia.

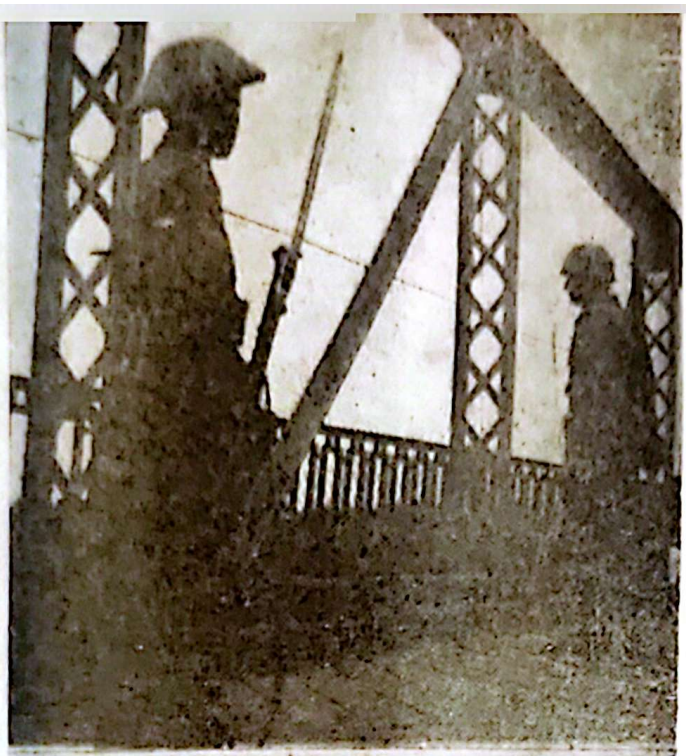
— The Central Committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam sends a message of condolences to the Central Committee of the Albanian Party of Labour on the death of Enver Hoxha.

14. Nguyen Huu Tho, Chairman of the National Assembly of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, pays an official friendship visit to Nicaragua.

— Opening of the finals of the national table-tennis competition for 1985 (prizes offered by the **Nhan Dan** daily).

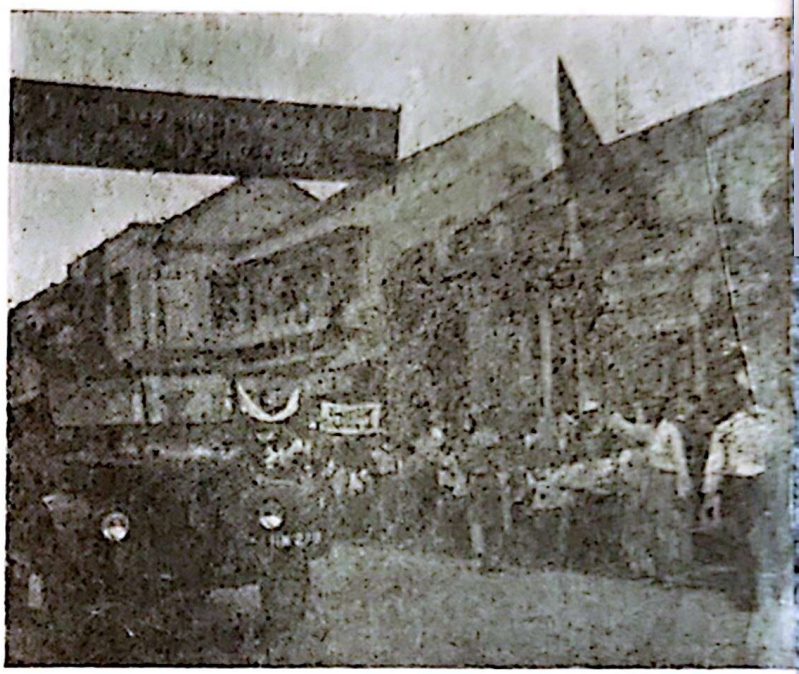
15. The Council of Ministers makes public a decision conferring on 40 provinces, cities and special zones under the central administration, the Gold Star Order, the highest distinction given by the State, for their great contributions and achievements over 40 years of revolutionary struggle against foreign aggression and for building and safeguarding socialist Vietnam.

THE LIBERATION OF HAI PHONG 30 YEARS AGO ON 13 MAY 1955

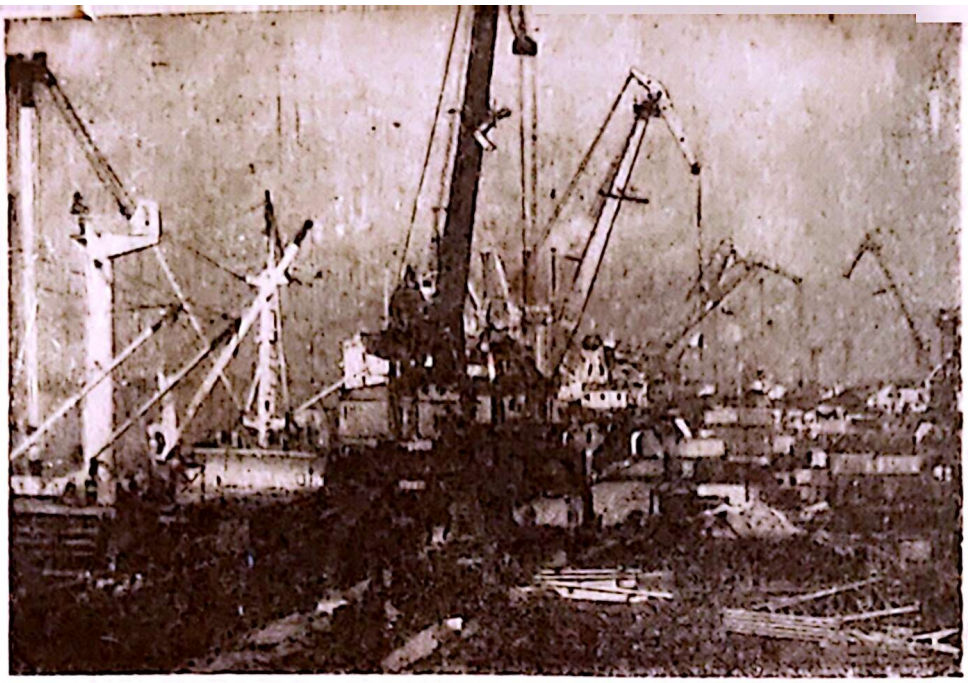


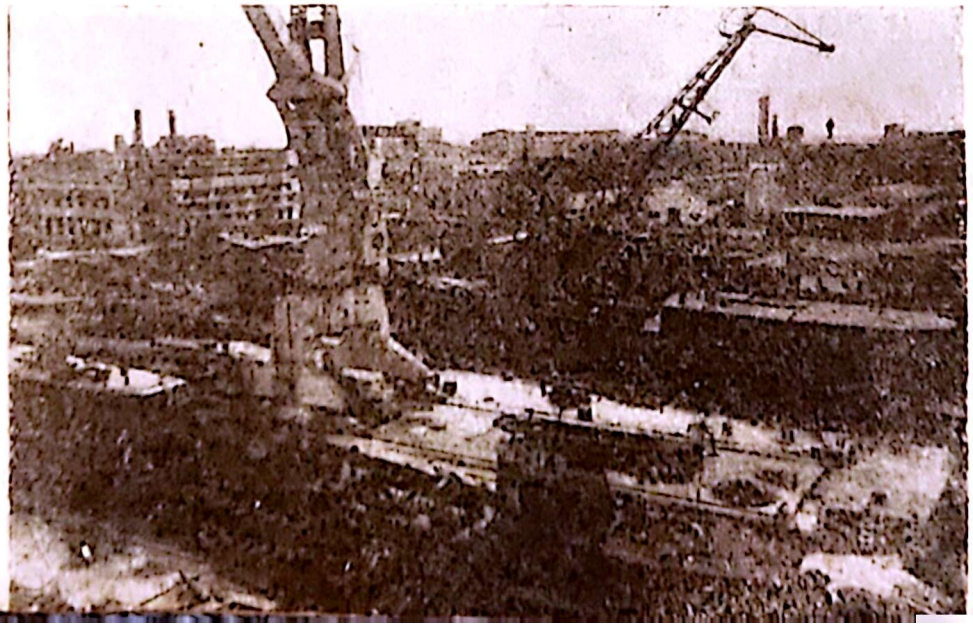
The last soldiers of the French expeditionary corps got ready to withdraw from the city and the first soldiers of the Vietnam People's Army were coming to take over.

Photos: VNA



. The people of Hai Phong warmly greeted their liberators.





HAI PHONG TODAY

● A view of the port.

● The An Duong bridge, recently built with city funds.

● The Bach Dang Shipyard.

Photos: VNA

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